

# Over the Years



Indra Rai Sharma

## **Over the Years**

### **-A Photo Autobiography**

In 2010 before going to US, I had been going through my old papers. As it appeared, I had wished to pen down my autobiography long back. In my diary on February 10, 1963, I had written that if I would ever write my autobiography, I would caption it 'My Life and Dreams'. In 1997 again, in my acceptance letter to the notice regarding my impending retirement that I sent on June 23, to Mr. A. Sankara Narayanan, Executive Director, M/S Hindustan Motors, I wrote: "I wish I could pen down my years at HM some day and hope that it would provide useful insight for our budding engineers as Lee Iacocca's biography or the book 'On a clear day you can see General Motors' provided to millions of its readers." I knew that I was not that great a name in HM or industry, though I aspired to be one. Perhaps I didn't select the right profession or I couldn't take advantage of the opportunity that I got to convert the same to become big. I remember my teasing of my grandmother and later on my mother in school days by telling them time and again that they should not expect me to do routine household work, as I would be a big man. Later on I joked with some close friends and their wives that one day I would get into number 1 Rajpath. I meant Rastrapati Bhawan. I failed to become as great or big as I wanted but I did work very hard for every assignment that I got. I get satisfaction by saying, 'They also serve who stand and wait'. But I always longed to write about what happened over the years in my life. And the story is here.

## **Background**

It is an autobiography of an ordinary Indian who came from a very remote village of Bihar and a typical rural background and culture with all its weaknesses and strengths. I have penned it down for my own satisfaction and perhaps for the next generations. As my own children left for US just after education, they might not be in knowledge of many things about my early life and the family. And now with all the three sons settled in US, I can't but think that way. Some among them may be inquisitive enough to seek some information about the root of the family and me. Even some in the extended family may like it. Since my college day, I have come across the persons of Indian origin from Mauritius requesting me to help them find their ancestral village in Bihar from where their forefathers had immigrated. As I am trying to put it through digital media, it may survive for the posterity.

The incidents narrated are not intended to hurt anyone. However, if it creates any misgiving, I only solicit excuse.

What is there in the name? My surname would have been 'Rai' as it is for all others of my community and family in the village. But my grandfather got my name 'Dhanwantar Rai' by which I was known to all in the village changed to 'Indra Roy Sharma' when I came to Birlapur for my schooling. 'Dhanwantar' was derived from Dhanwantari. Dhanwantari was a great doctor, a character mentioned in Mahabharat, the epic. Indra was the king of all gods, as per Indian scriptures. The change of my name came on advice of a learned gentle man, who was from near Patna and a neighbour in Birlapur. My grandfather was impressed by the wisdom and knowledge of the gentleman and respected him. 'Sharma' was added, as according to the

gentleman that was the right title for our community. While filling the form of School final examination, the teacher-in-charge thought it proper to make me a little Bengali and changed the spellings to 'Indra Ray Sarma'. I didn't object. On all my certificates and degrees, I am still 'Ray Sarma'. In Hind Motors they knew me only as 'IR Sharma'. I prefer to be called 'Indra' only, but my Bengali friends called me 'Indro' and the Punjabi ones 'Inder'. How does it matter?

I started the work on this photo autobiography during my visit to US in September-November 2010. Shannon and Anand had shifted to Cary, North Carolina. Yamuna needed me more because of her age, and Border was no more near or on the route of Anand's office as in Santa Clara or Pleasanton. I had plenty of time. I started to work first for preparing a photo-book. Later on, however, I thought it prudent to provide the background of the photographs to that very soon took the shape of an illustrated autobiography for near and dear ones. The credit, to a great extent, goes to Shannon and Anand, who kept on encouraging me to carry on with the work till completed to my satisfaction. The friendly laptop and i-Pad made my work easy.

While writing about the various elders in the family, I found it disrespectful to use just their names. I was also not ready to use the English equivalents of the relationship with their names. So I decided to use their names with Bhojpuri suffix as I used to address them in day-to-day conversations or while talking about them with the family members or relatives: Baba (grandfather), Aaji (grandmother), Mai (mother), Babuji (father), Nana (maternal grandfather), Nani (maternal grandmother), Chacha (uncle), Chachi (aunty) or Mama (maternal uncle) for identifying them while documenting my story.

## Family

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene,*

*The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:*

*Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,*

*And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

-Thomas Gray (1716-1771)-Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

I know very little about my ancestors. Till my grandfather was alive, I never tried to know more from him. Perhaps I never felt the need of the information. I could have even requested him to write about them. He was good at it. My grandfather had mentioned about his grandfather, Juthan Baba. He lived a long life and had four sons, Jai Baba, Shivdas Baba, Ramdas Baba and my great grandfather, Ram Pragash Baba. Juthan Baba was highly respected in the village. When he would pass through the village lanes, no one would remain sitting on cot. Ram Pragash Baba

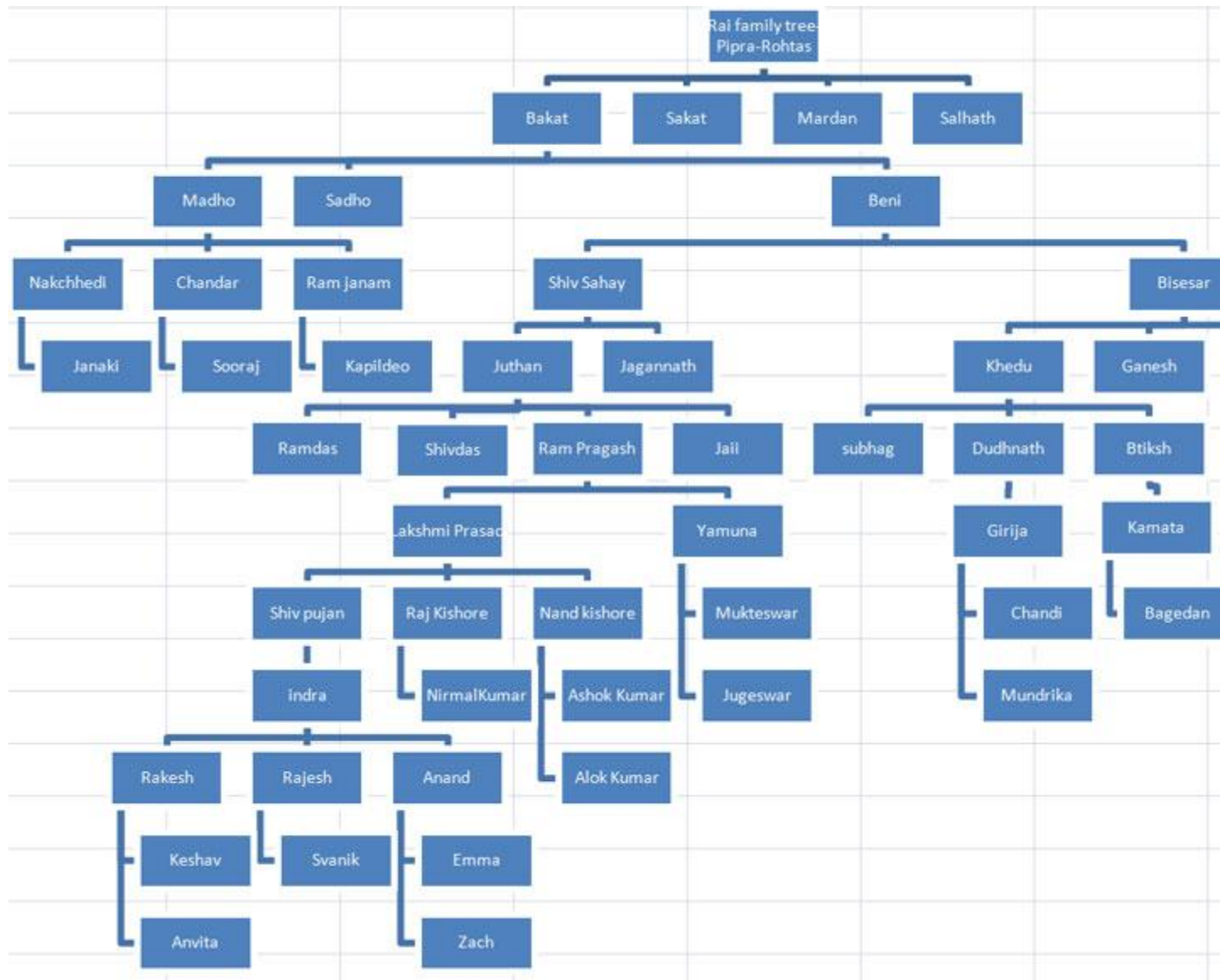
was good in playing '*dholak*' and was married with Bataso Devi in a rich family of Diul, a village near Arrah. Ram Pragash Baba had three children-two sons and a daughter. My grandfather, Lakshmi Baba was his eldest son, and Jamuna Baba, the younger one. Their only sister was married in village Tiara and had a son, Shyama Charan. Her husband had a short figure and was dark in complexion. By education he was a lawyer, though he never practiced it.

Lakshmi Baba was married in a village named Dhobdiha. The name of my grandmother was Gango Devi. Her mother had died very early. Her father was in prison when she got married. He had come on parole for the marriage. My grandparents got blessed with three sons. My father, Shiw Pujan was the eldest. He had two younger brothers; Raj Kishore and Nand Kishore. Nand Kishore Chacha is still alive. Though my grandfather had moved to West Bengal for employment, but my grandmother remained at home in the village. All her sons were born there.

Jamuna Baba was married in a village named Nagari with Ramnano Devi, the daughter of Ram Avatar Pande. He had two sons and one daughter- Ram Dulari. Mukteswar Chacha was the eldest. Jugeswar Chacha is the younger one and alive. Ram Dulari got married to a pretty educated young man, Suresh Rai in a village Intwa, but she died quite early in age. Suresh Phupha got married again and got a daughter and a son from the new wife. Later on, Suresh also got murdered along with his son, Sanjay from Ram Dulari. I remember having warned Suresh against getting himself involved in village politics that had grown really dangerous in Bihar.

Once during college days when I was holidaying in Pipra, my village, I happened to compile the family tree shown below. One elderly person Ram Daras Pandey, who lived in our village and was very close to my family, provided the information. He didn't have any family of his own. Everyone in our family used to respect him and he also loved us. Later on, my great grandmother Sadhuain Aaji also confirmed the authenticity of the family tree. They knew many things about the ancestors that I could have documented but I missed the opportunity. Now I fail to remember what made me prepare the family tree. But it happened for the posterity.





The family tree above is of one *patti* of our community - 'Jaltharia Patti' in my village. The second *patti* is known as 'Bhojpuria Patti'. Patti is the group of families that are the descendants of the same person. Bhojpuria Patti constitutes of the descendants of the sister of Mardan Baba who was married in Diya Dhakaich, but later on, she got a landed property gifted and came to live in Pipra with her husband.

Mardan Rai became legendary for his strength, courage and valor. As the story goes, he helped a Brahmin in getting back his cows. A strong goon had forcibly stolen the cows of the Brahmin from somewhere near Buxar in north and was taking away. The Brahmin kept on following him and requesting the people of the villages on the way to help him. No one in the region dared to go against the goon. When the goon was crossing Pipra, the Brahmin approached Mardan Baba. Mardan Baba couldn't tolerate the injustice, decided to challenge the rogue and vanquished him in a direct fight with a 'lohan'. The Brahmin got back his cows and was extremely happy. He

offered to give some cows to Mardan Baba who refused. The Brahmin returned with his cows to his village and on the way whom sever he met, he narrated the story how Mardan Baba defeated the rogue. Over the years, Pipra got added a prefix after Mardan Baba's name- 'Mardan Rai ka Pipra'. It perhaps also differentiated it from another village with the same name under the same police station.

In 2003, I met Jhanar Rai, the oldest man of the village nearing the century score that year while I was in Pipra. I came to know about the history of Pipra a little more. Our ancestors came to Pipra and other few surrounding villages from Tekari, may be some 300 years ago. Some Muslim and few low caste families were the inhabitants of Pipra before that. It was thick forests all around. Parashu Baba, the youngest one got Pipra and his other three brothers Samahuta, Pipra and Rampur. Their eldest brother remained in Tekari. Later on, the brother at Rampur left the village and came to Raghopur. Perhaps that had been the reason that the children of these villages are not married with one another.



Me with Jhanar Rai at Pipra's temple

Jhanar Rai narrated an interesting story about Parashu Baba that might be real or anecdote. Parashu Baba being the youngest was very much attached to his mother. Instead of establishing himself in Pipra, he would run away very often to Tekari. The other three brothers got worried and annoyed. They decided to teach him some lesson. One they caught Parashu Baba, dug a pit near the present 'Budhawa Sivbaba', a platform with a Shivling, put Parashu Baba in it and covered him up to his neck in that. Somehow the news reached to Parashu's mother. She came weeping all the way, and started crying for help. But she couldn't find any one who could help. A Brahmin later on came out to help her in getting Parashu out from the pit. Parashu Baba fell on his feet. Brahmin asked Parashu Baba to lay the foundation of the Garh (earthen mound) and inhabit Pipra. He also said, "My son, you will prosper. Your brothers and their descendents will come to you asking for some help of cash and kind. Your descendents will never have to go to them." And Pipra grew around the high mud garh. I had seen the garh. In childhood we used to go there for playing. Over the years, the garh has been encroached and is now nonexistent.

Jhanar Rai also provided some more information. The only sister of Mardan Baba was married to someone of Diya Dhakaich in Diyara on the bank of Ganga. She didn't like the corn and millet that were the main food there instead of rice and *kodo* in Pipra. Finally Mardan Rai and his brothers invited his brother-in-law who was in army to come to live in Pipra. The families of Bhojpuria Patti are their descendents and are of Gautam gotra.

In 2010, Shiw Muni Chacha now in 80s who has been an English teacher in Dalmianagar gave me a family tree of 'Bhojpuria Patti' too. The name of the sister of Mardan Baba was Sheo Kunwar Devi and her husband's name Bhadori Dube. They were blessed with three sons- Manogi, Dhantal and Manorath. All the families of Bhojpuria Patti are their descendants. Over the years, they changed their surname to 'Rai' from 'Dube'. The name Bhojpuria is perhaps due to the proximity of Bhojpur to Diya Dhakaich.

I don't know if all these stories are correct but that's all that I could know.

## **Pipra**

My village, Pipra comes under the police station of Karahgar. Pipra was part of the district known as Shahabad with Arrah as its headquarter. But the people, particularly those outside the state knew it only as Arrah. Sasaram was our subdivision. Culturally, the region was backward. The people were considered very arrogant and rough. The people of the district spoke Bhojpuri, a dialect of Hindi. It has an illustrious history from the Epic days. Viswamitra's hermitage was around Buxar, where Ram and Lakshman came with the hermit to kill the Rakshas- Tadka, Subahu, Marich and their clan. That must be the reason for the rustic culture of the region. The famous Shershah, the Afgan emperor of India was from Sasaram. He was one who built Grand Trunk Road from Dhaka to Pesawar. He was a great fighter and reformist too. In the first Independence War of 1857, Beer Kunwar Singh who was the landlord of Jagdishpur near Arrah fought against the Britishers bravely and earned for himself a respectable name in the history.

In Lalu Yadav era, the district of Shahabad got divided into four smaller districts- Bhojpur, Buxar, Rohtas and Kaimur. Pipra is now under the district of Rohtas with Sasaram as its headquarter. The name Rohtas is also associated with a mythical figure Rohitashwa, son of King Harishchandra, famous for his charity. There is a historical fort in the district called Rohtasgarh on the top of a hill of Kaimur range of mountains.

Pipra has an irrigation canal (Balthari line) that was perhaps constructed in Raj era on its western flank going from south to north. It starts from a big canal straight from the Sone barrage at Indrapuri near Dalmianagar or Dehri-on-Sone. Dehri-on-Sone at one time was the biggest industrial hub in the region. As it had factories owned by famous Ram Krishna Dalmia, the place got the name Dalmianagar.

The small bridge across the canal in Pipra was a land mark of the village and was called Pipra ka pool. In my childhood I loved to sit on the parapet and watch the water flowing. Later on too, I enjoyed coming and sitting there with some acquaintances in the morning and evening when I visited the village. Many a times we took the canal bank to go and come from Sasaram. I drove to my village first time after I got a car of my own through the bank of the canal. For Chhutt

Puja, I remember coming here with the women folks of the family in childhood for the offerings to the setting and rising sun.



Village in background



Concrete lanes of Pipra

There is a sub-canal (*karha*) almost midway between Pipra and Rampur, the next village in the north. That is called 'Shah ka karha'. Jhanar Baba related the story related to a major fight between our family and the Shah of Badahari for the karha and its water. After the main canal got ready, the Shah got this karha sanctioned for irrigation of his land in nearby village Samahuta. He had promised that he would allow the farmers of land along the karha to use the water. But after some years, he started objecting and obstructing. It had so happened that the farmers including our own ancestors never got into any legal agreement in the beginning. The situation became very serious one year and both sides went for a big warlike conflict. The Shah had come on his rogue elephant and had thought that the farmers would run away out of its fear. As soon as Shivdas Baba heard this, he rode on the bare back of his horse, rushed to the place and attacked Shah. He pulled him down and beat him with the accessory called hunter in local language that was used for controlling his horse. The Shah fled away, but then went to court and

filed a criminal case against Shivdas Baba. The legal battle went up to High court that was in Calcutta those days. Shivdas Baba travelled up to Calcutta. One Khedu Rai accompanied him for cooking his food. Finally Shivdas Baba was acquitted, but the farmers were not permitted to use the water. Jamuna Baba, later on, got dug a parallel wide drain from the canal to irrigate our land.

I have seen Pipra undergoing all major transformation over the years. I remember in my childhood Pipra was recognized by the three tall palm trees that were there in the northern periphery. They are no more there. There were a number of mango orchards in the northern side of the village. They all have gone. In my childhood, almost all the dwellings in the village were of mud. Over the years, almost all houses are of bricks. I also have seen the lanes of the village getting knee deep with mud in the rainy season that we just couldn't go out of our courtyard. Today almost all the lanes are surfaced with bricks; some are even having concrete top (see photo). Most of the households are having toilets today. One can see solar plates also on the roofs of many houses.

It was very difficult to reach Pipra, particularly in rainy seasons for kids and women. One could come up to Amauwalia from Sasaram on the road connecting Sasaram with Buxar by bus, but for Pipra that was about 5=6 kilometers on east, one had to walk through cultivated fields.

For going to Bodarhi from Pipra, I had to walk 6 kms. to catch from Kharadih a narrow gauge train, run between Sasaram and Arrah by Martin Burn. After reaching Bikramgunj, I had walked another 6 kms or more to Bodarhi many times, as there were just few buses on the route. Today, Pipra is connected with two metallic roads and a number of bus services running on the roads connecting it to Sasaram, Varanasi as well as Patna. One can reach Pipra at any odd hours.

Pipra never had any school, even a primary one. Now it has one for up to class VIII with beautiful building. It has enough land to have even high school in the place. The credit must go to the then Mukhia Shri Awadh Bihari. Unfortunately, he lost the election in 2011.



New Village School

The big open place in the south of the village that used to be our playground has shrunk, because of encroachments but still big enough to be converted into a good park with sufficient space for a weekly market that can boost the economy of the village.





The huge government land on the south of Pipra

Pipra has four temples or worshipping places. The oldest one is in the centre of the village. I really appreciate the endeavour of an ordinary person Lakshman, barber by profession who finally could complete his temple of Lord Shiva. The latest of the temples was of Bajrangbali that has been built by Basdeo Rai, the wrestler. The Kali Mai Temple is the old one as usual in the eastern side of the village and has undergone a number of renovations at different time.



The Centrally located Oldest Temple



Kali Mai Temple



Left: Temple constructed by Lakshman Thakur Right: Statue in the Hanuman Temple in the background

## Sasaram

Pipra is about 16 kms from Sasaram, the town famous for Shershah and Jagjivan Ram. Jagjivan Ram won all elections from this constituency. Some also call Sasaram as Sahasram and connect it to mythological Sahsrabahu. Shershah was born in Sasaram that has a mausoleum of his father in the town. Shershah's own tomb, popularly known as 'Rauza', is inside a huge water tank. According to my grandfather, the tank once supplied drinking water to the whole of the town. The tank has brick wall and the maids (Kaharin) used to draw water from the tank using rope on the earthen tumblers. No one could enter or take bath in it. Baba had narrated a story. A sadhu came on a summer evening and entered the tank. The police men there arrested the sadhu. As the court time was over, he was put in a cell of police station. The sadhu was really pained at it. He requested first to release but when they didn't, he cursed that if he had polluted the water, let that be so. Next day the English magistrate acquitted him after warning. Pretty soon there was a hue and cry among the water drawers. The water had gone green and had become undrinkable. The

magistrate sent for the sadhu, but he couldn't be traced. The government got the water in the tank drained out and filled with fresh water. But the water got green again. The people couldn't use the water thereafter for drinking. As the story goes, one of the policemen met the sadhu again and prayed to take back the curse. The sadhu told him that it was possible only if a man saner than him would take bath in the tank, it would again turn into drinkable. And the tank still awaits a saner man than the sadhu.



Yamuna outside Shershah Rouza 1966



Outside Shershah Rauza, 2007

In my childhood, perhaps, when we were going to Calcutta, my grandfather had taken me to Shershah, went around it and explained its uniqueness. I remember we went through the narrow and steep steps up to third floor. He pointed to me the huge stone slabs used in construction and



wanted me to imagine how difficult it would have been without any machinery some five hundred years ago. Perhaps that first visit to the Rauza made me interested in historical buildings and I visited a large number of them in my life time whenever I got some opportunity. I visited Shershah tomb almost every time I went to Sasaram.

### **Sadhuain Aaji**

I was fortunate to have seen my great grandmother, the wife of Ram Pragash Baba and Sadhuain Aaji. They, particularly Sadhuain Aaji took care of me in my childhood when my mother used to be busy in kitchen or with household works as the eldest daughter-in-law of her generation. Sadhuain Aaji would take me to the houses in neighbourhood, particularly to the house of Shiw Muni Chacha. They died only when I was in Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. My great grandmother was short in figure and frail in body and kept herself in low key in the presence of Sadhuain Aaji. Sadhuain Aaji was the wife of Ramdas Baba, one of the brothers of Ram Pragash Baba.

Interestingly, the oldest photograph available in the family is one that has Lakshmi Baba with loving 'Sadhuain Aaji'. It was taken in Ganga Sagar Mela in West Bengal. She was well travelled. She had been to almost all the famous Hindu pilgrimage centres in India including Badrinath and Rameswaram. She would have come to Birlapur, perhaps in early 40s to go to Ganga Sagar for a bath at the holy confluence of Ganga (Hooghly) and Bay of Bengal on Makar Sankranti. Small boats used to ply from Birlapur for taking the pilgrims to Ganga Sagar. I remember my grandmother using the service. As per the beliefs among Hindus, one must visit Ganga Sagar only once in life. It normally falls on every January 14.

Sadhuain Aaji was a child-widow and a great soul. Her real name was Kawaleswari Devi and was from a village named Baisadih about 3 kms east of Hasan Bazaar. As I remember, she always took my side when I used to have quarrels with my uncle Nand Kishore Chacha and loved me the most.



Sadhuain Aaji at Ganga Sagar Mela with Lakshmi Baba

Both, Lakshmi Baba and Jamuna Baba respected Sadhuain Aaji and consulted her in all family affairs. She laid a very simple life, but also managed household affairs, particularly the milk management. Till she remained in good health, no one could enter kitchen without taking bath. She was also very good in singing the folk songs for all occasions, be it the birth of a child or a marriage. She used to go to everyone's house if invited. Even in the old age she was in demand. I have some sweet memories of my childhood when she would take me to the neighbourhood houses with her. Many a times I would sleep with her and request for singing. And for making me eat she would sing '*Chanda mama, aare aao.bare aao, nadia kinare aao, Sona ka katorawa mein doodh bhat lele aao ho*'. Everyone in the community, men and women, respected her. I still cherish many sweet memories of her. She would give me a slate and ask me to write '*Ram a gati dehu sumati*'. I don't know what it meant. Sitting on the door step of our house facing the lane in the village, she would call any person passing by the lane and ask him to write something on the slate so that I could keep on copying. Perhaps that was the best that she could have done.

My mother went to live in her village Bodarhi, after the death of my maternal grandmother, the only lady in the house of my Nana. Lakshmi Baba brought me back to our village after an epidemic in Bodarhi. Sadhuain Aaji accompanied me and Nand Kishore Chacha, the youngest uncle, to Birlapur for schooling, may be in 1947. My grandfather was a teacher in Birlapur Vidyalaya. I remember a sweet incident that had happened during that sojourn to Birlapur. Sadhuain Aaji used to narrate this pretty often when I grew to tease me. Once Shadhuain Aaji

asked me jokingly, if they should get me married to the little girl next door. I seriously asked, “How will I understand what she will say? I don’t know Bangla.”

However, we returned back to Pipra from Birlapur in few months that time. Later on, I couldn’t be with them and meet them only when I would come from Birlapur during school holidays. My mother would not be there in Pipra but these two old women would bestow so much of love and affection on me that I never even thought for a moment about her absence. Sadhuain Aaji would always give me some real good sweet that she would have brought from the rural fair of Babhani Pahari during Shivratri, dry fruit or freshly prepared butter. I do also remember of one earlier Shivratri when I had accompanied her to the fair. Both, my own great grandmother and Sadhuain Aaji were alive when Yamuna my wife had joined the family in May 1960. They bestowed their best of love for the first great granddaughter of the family. Yamuna also served and nursed them to their satisfaction. Sadhuain Aaji lived up to early 60s.

My great grandmother died on December 11, 1961. Lakshmi Baba was still in Calcutta. Hindustan Motors had just opened after a long strike. Lakshmi Baba joined the shradh and other functions. Jamuna Baba was very ill. The last rites were performed by my father, the eldest grandson.

After the death of Sadhuain Aaji, Pipra became lost its attraction for me.

### **Lakshmi Baba-My Mentor**

Lakshmi Baba again took me to Birlapur for schooling in 1948. One of my uncles, Mukteswar Chacha, the eldest son of Jamuna Baba, was already studying in Birlapur Vidyalaya. I attended class IV in the school without getting formal admission. But after few months, I went back again to the village.

As I grew with Lakshmi Baba, I became more and more attached with him. I could know the story of his struggle in life.

Lakshmi Baba was one of the few lucky ones in those days who went up to high school. Hardly very few could get schooling in that period. Perhaps the due credit must also be given to Ram Pragash Baba and Juthan Baba who supported him. He was from a remote village of Bihar. It was strange that the family could afford the fee and other expenses. The schooling was not free in Raj era. Interestingly, he had to read all subjects in English. He had his schooling in Arrah and then in Sasaram government district high school. Ram Pragash Baba had taken Lakshmi Baba to Arrah after he passed out from village lower primary school in January 1915 and got him admitted in KJ Academy, later named as Har Prasad Jain School. There were only five high schools in the whole of the district Shahabad- three in Arrah, the headquarters of the district, one in Dumraon and the other in Sasaram. Two of his classmates, Hardwar Rai and Ram Daras Rai from Pipra, got admitted in the school at Sasaram. KJ Academy was just 100 yards from the huge house of his maternal uncle, Rampati Pandey of Diul. All his maternal brothers were also reading in the same school. Ram Pragash Baba would have preferred for Arrah to provide Lakshmi Baba a good environment for studying along with the children from the in-law’s family. It would have also provided Baba with some guardian to look after him. But perhaps it didn’t

happen. One day Baba ran away from the school, and came to the railway station. He had only half a rupee in his pocket. He boarded the Martin Burn light railway for the home station. In the compartment, he saw one relative of Makundpur, Shri Mahesh Pandey, who knew him. He tried to escape from his sight, but failed. The gentleman could see and recognize him. Shri Pandey took him to his village, kept for few days, and deputed a person to accompany Baba up to our village. Lakshmi Baba could start his studies again only in early 1918 in Sasaram Zilla School. He stayed in a room at 'Mahavir Sthan', a temple complex in village Kuraich in the outskirt of Sasaram with one Lakshmi Tiwari of Sonadih. We used to visit that temple whenever we came in Sasaram. The temple is very near to Chandramani Mama's house in Sasaram. In the month of October 1918, Mahatma Gandhi had visited Sasaram after his famous Indigo fight against Britishers in Motihari and held a meeting near Shersha Mausoleum. In 1921 because of Mahatma Gandhi's call of non-cooperation, Baba has also left school. The whole affair had disenchanted Baba. It was again Ram Pragash Baba and JK Kar, the headmaster of the school who made Lakshmi Baba to join the school again.

Lakshmi Baba, according to his own confession in his diary, failed to finish his matriculation, rather sent-up examination of the school successfully even after taking a second attempt (1924 and in 1925). That was the end of his formal education.

Unlike his other childhood friends Lakshmi Baba didn't join household farming and left the village to explore and find suitable employment for living. Perhaps he wished to find his worth. He left his younger brother to help his father in the management of the landed property. As he used to tell me, it was really difficult to find a job even in 1920s. But it is interesting to know about the prices of commodities around that time from Baba's diary: Re 1 could buy about 27 kilos of wheat or jiggery and about three kilos of pure ghee.

In 1925, Lakshmi Baba participated in campaigning for Raja Rajiv Ranjan Prasad Singh for the election for membership of State Council. Raja had promised a job for him if he would win. Raja won but didn't keep the promise. After unsuccessfully trying with some the-then 'kings' in Ramnagar, Chandragarh and Surajpura, he left the village on November 20, 1927, and came to Calcutta. He lived with his distant cousin brothers Kamala Rai of Rampur and Sivdan Rai of Katra for some months. They were employed in private railway companies. After working at many places including an orphanage near Batanagar, Baba ultimately reached Birlapur. GD Birla had set up the first Indian jute mills at Birlapur on the bank of River Hooghly. It was here that Baba could get settled.

Lakshmi Baba was the pioneer in starting a school in the industrial town of Birlapur. His first primary school was in two labour quarters on the bank of Hooghly. Later on, Birla Jute Mills built 'Birlapur Vidyalaya', the high school right inside the factory premises.

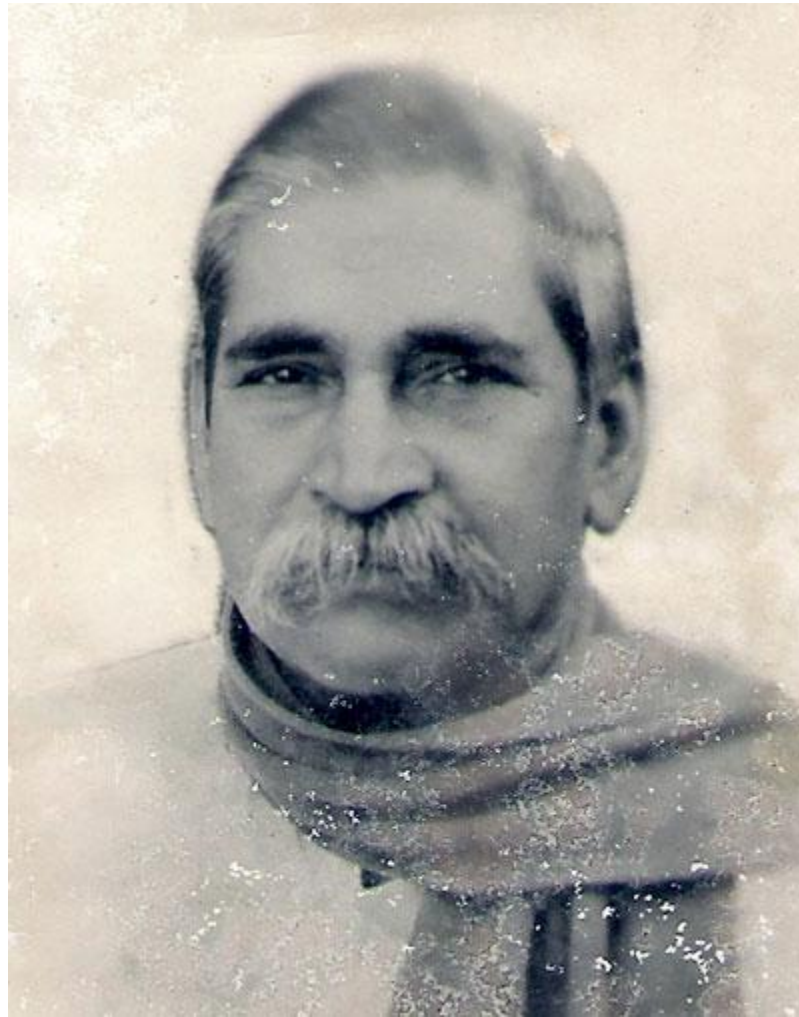
My grandfather, Lakshmi Prasad Ray was very popular and known among all classes of people from general manager to the sweepers in Birlapur. To most, he was 'Ray Babu' or 'Ray Saheb' or but formally, he was known as LP Ray. He belonged to the era when a teacher was really respected in the society. He had helped many very senior executives in the mills from Rajasthan (Marwaris) to get privately educated. Later on, he worked as tutor for their children at their residences. I saw his intense interest in teaching. He privately taught even some elderly sweepers

who had come from all the way from Rajasthan. That was something very unusual in those days. I remember one very smart person among them whose name was Babulal. Baba's philosophy of life was 'simple living and high thinking'. He loved white and wore only hand washed white. He was vegetarian. He could cook well and was extremely fond of sweets. He could consume huge lot of good sweets. I had myself seen that. And with his moustaches, he looked really smart and impressive.

I will not be wrong if I call him tech-savvy. Lakshmi Baba was one who got a septic tank toilet built inside the house in Pipra for the first time in the region. I faintly remember his bringing in of a mason from Birlapur to build it. It was very effective and never caused any problem. I do also remember the radio set that he brought for the house from Calcutta. It operated on battery. Two huge bamboo poles were fixed with a wire hanging between them from which the aerial was connected in the radio set. It was something very strange in those days. And many persons from the neighbourhood, even neighbouring villages would come to listen to the news from All India Radio. Later on, perhaps it couldn't be repaired or those running the village home couldn't keep it operative.

Lakshmi Baba maintained very warm relation with his school days' friends of the village. He would meet with them and converse intimately for long time. I got a slap once for insisting for a mango that he had brought to offer to his friend Jagdeo Lal. Sadhuain Aaji got very much pained with his action. But later on, he convinced me about my mistake and solaced his aunty. Lakshmi Baba also inspired and helped many younger persons of the village for better education and for getting engaged suitably. Baba took Lakshmi Rai, one Youngman having the same name from the neoghbourhood to Assam for getting engaged with help of one of his acquaintances there. He later on became pretty rich. Whenever, Baba would visit Pipra invariably those persons would come to meet him. Sheomuni Rai, Ram Narayan Rai, Bans Narayan Rai and Raj Neti Rai were among them.

I was the darling of my grandfather. I remember in Birlapur in early days of schooling, I used to lock the front door so that my grandfather would not leave for tuition without solving some of my arithmetic problems that I was not able to do myself. I do also remember how I accompanied him to one house of his student where he would go for providing tuition. I would fall asleep and he would carry me on his back in late night from that distant place. I used to sleep with him and even in sleep I kept on touching him to find if he was there. In case I didn't find him, I used to make a lot of hue and cry even at late night. How can I forget how I would go to bed very early in those days? And then I would get up in late night and demand food, and my grandmother would always keep and give me something of my liking. I liked few selected food items. I hated *jag gory (goor)* and boiled rice too in those days.



Lakshmi Baba

My grandfather shared almost everything about himself with me. In early years, when there were few teachers in the school, he was expected to teach even mathematics in higher classes. He was not proficient enough for that. On every Saturday he would go to Calcutta, sit with some teachers whom he knew, and learn to solve the tough questions of mathematics, come back and teach it to his students. He wrote the whole book of very popular *Radheshyam Ramayan* by himself to improve his handwriting. I saw the whole of the handwritten book. He later on had got it bound. All the family members including my father, uncles and then my cousin brothers loved the book, read and recited it to others who eagerly listened to it. It was Ramayana's story written in simple Hindi language that was very easy to understand unlike Tulsidas's *Ramcharitmanas*. I have few pages of it that had survived the generosity of the family members in lending it to one and everyone in the village.

Interestingly, Lakshmi Baba himself used to play harmonium that he owned and sing occasionally, if I or someone insisted for it. He had a very sweet voice. Mukteswar Chacha pursued the singing to certain extent. Perhaps Rakesh, my eldest son, has imbibed it because of him.

Lakshmi Baba took me one year to many villages of our relatives. It was sometime in mid 1940s. We visited Taraon as first stop. Taraon is the village of Chadra Mani Mama. Next stop was at Dhobdiha, the village where Lakshmi Baba himself was married. Thereafter, we went to Mandauli, the village of the first marriage of Mukteswar Chacha. The Nana there got a kurta stitched for me. We then visited the village of Sadhain Aaji, Baisadih. And thereafter we moved to Nagari or Dhanauti, the railway station of Martin Burn Light Railway that used to connect Sasaram with Arrah. Yamuna Baba would have come to this place years ago for his marriage. He never visited the village thereafter. A story goes like this. Yamuna Baba had to travel once to Arrah through Dhanauti to deposit the amount of land revenue in the collectorate. As I was told he had covered his face with a sheet when the station came so that he wouldn't be recognized by someone from Nagari who could force him visiting Nagari. We went also to Harpur nearby. That was a wonderful experience. We then moved to Arrah and visited the maternal relatives of Lakshmi Baba of Diul. One of his maternal brothers, Deo Nandan Pandey was alive. Baba had lived there during his schooling in Arrah. They were a big landlord and had a house in Arrah. It was a real good relation building endeavour. That was the reason that in the marriage of Nand Kishore Chacha next year all these relatives came to Pipra to join the marriage party to Laduee. Interesting, it was just a chance that I couldn't get married that year.

My grandfather never left me alone. He accompanied me like a protector, be it during the admission in Presidency College or IIT, Kharagpur. He regularly visited me in my hostel and kept on inspiring me. Many a times he helped me in taking right decision at the required moment.





Me, Lakshmi Baba and Aaji, grandmother

He could not accompany me when I went to Hind Motor for the interview on August 1, 1961. He was not well. He got an attack of paralysis on the same day while going to the market. On my return from Hind Motor, I found him on bed. He couldn't speak. His right side had been affected. His handwriting used to be really excellent. He wrote a page in his diary every day. He was worried that it wouldn't be possible for him to write any more.

I remained at his bedside and nursed him for a month before I joined Hind Motor on September 1, 1961. I took care of him and kept him engaged reading from books and newspaper. He recovered fast. I still remember his will to live. Though a strict vegetarian all his life, he asked me if taking eggs would help faster recovery. Actually, Durga Babu, the aged doctor of Budge Budge General Hospital was attending on him. He had advised him for taking eggs in a lighter vein.

In late 50s, my grandfather took retirement so that Nand Kishore Chacha could get an honourable job as teacher in his place. But Lakshmi Baba continued teaching. He got a school started in another jute mill complex in nearby Kalipur. The General Manager was known to him and happened to respect him.

My grandfather always wanted to see his sons in business and prosper. He tried many times. He started a milk business and bought two good buffaloes in Birlapur. He brought Raj Kishore



Chacha and Maloo, a helping hand from our village. But my uncle couldn't work hard enough to make it a success. My grandfather had to wind up the business selling one buffalo and sending the other one to my village home by train. I had seen tears in his eyes. Milk still remains a good business and was so at that time too. The enterprise had failed and his dream shattered. My father used to narrate how he brought that buffalo from a distant village near Arrah to our village and the trouble he faced.

My grandfather didn't get bogged down with the failure. He again invested in opening a small hotel in Sasaram. But Raj Kishore Chacha again failed him. As the last attempt, my grandfather after retirement got started a rice and wheat grinding mill operated by a diesel engine for Nand Kishore Chacha in Rampur. It was around 1962. I also contributed a good amount of the money that my mother had given me and was lying in the saving account at Sasaram for some emergency. The uncle started it well, worked very hard and it appeared that finally my grandfather would see at least one of his sons succeed. But on a day when the village was celebrating Holi, an unscrupulous family of Rampur attacked the mill. Some men from Pipra rushed to the place and in the fight that followed some got injured. The family had to go in long drawn and costly litigation. The entrepreneurial attempt failed again for the third time.



(From L to R)Nand Kishore Chacha, Ashok, Lakshmi Baba, Nirmal and myself in Dalmianagar, 1965

Lakshmi Baba, who had gone to live in the village after retirement, soon got his disillusionment with village life and its politics. He had to return to Dalmianagar, the only industrial town of the district. He again started working as an assistant in the high school of Shahu Jain Industries that had many industrial units in Dalmianagar with a huge residential complex in those days. He was pretty popular there too. I had visited him there a number of times. Yamuna too lived with him and my grandmother for some time. He lived there till last.

On September 20, 1965, Lakshmi Baba had developed a severe chest pain and got hospitalized in the factory hospital. As recorded in his diary, I had sent a telegram to bring him to Calcutta. He received it on September 23. Nand Kishore Chacha and many relatives visited him in hospital, but none arranged for his required treatment. He started going to the school and travelling all on

own long miles. On September 29, just nine days after his illness that was basically a severe heart attack, he had travelled to Pipra by bus and walked three miles from Karahgar to Pipra with Ashok and Nirmal who were kids then. Neither Nand Kishore Chacha or his elder brothers, nor Jamuna Baba forced him to leave his job and live peacefully at Pipra. He kept on working as a normal person till last. He cared about everything and everyone in the family and strained himself extremely. None bothered about him. Even when he knew he was sick with a serious problem, he kept moving between Dalmianagar, Sasaram, Pipra and Bodarhi till few days before his death. His diary of the year made me cry and angry too. Why couldn't his sons take care of him?

Lakshmi Baba got a heart attack while he was going to the railway station with my mother and Nirmal to see her off for Bodarhi. They returned in the same rickshaw to the residence. He died before the doctor arrived. It was on Saturday, December 18, 1965, Paus krishnapaksh ekadasi. He was just 62 years of age. I couldn't meet him at his last moment. I got information in Hind Motor and rushed for Pipra. I wept and wept. But tears don't bring back the gone one. According to a letter Baba had written to me few days ago, he wished to go to Mathura with my grandmother and take bath in River Yamuna and wanted to stop working anymore.

Today sometimes I consider myself guilty of not inviting him to come and live with me in Hind Motor. I could have afforded that as I had an accommodation too. I wished he could have just dropped in some day and started living with me. I was busy and working hard to establish myself. But his presence would have helped me.

There was one reason perhaps that I didn't bring my grandfather to live with me. I knew with him would come many other family members. Perhaps I couldn't have afforded that with whatever salary I was getting and the accommodation I had. My grandfather had been very liberal and spendthrift throughout his life. He remained short of money too. I kept on sending money to my grandfather whenever he asked for it. It was again he who had told me to get some loan of the family returned to get back our land that was mortgaged with the money lending neighbour in the village. I had taken up that as project. I could not have saved if I would have brought him or given whatever he demanded. I have included the page listing the family debt in the appendix.

I kept on financially helping Pipra family through Nand Kishore Chacha who was running the show there whenever he asked, be it the marriage of Ram Dulari Phua, the sister of Mukteswar Chacha or at the time of the death of my grandfather and grandmother. Unfortunately, the lack of discipline in managing financial affairs of the joint family with no strategy for improving the revenue used to create the constant deficit and scarcity. The gap was too big to be bridged with my salary at Hindustan Motors. I didn't live any expensive life style ever.

In 1966 before leaving for UK, I called Nand Kishore Chacha to Hind Motor and handed over all my savings in the bank to the last rupee, around Rs 5000 or more, for paying back the family loan that I had promised to my grandfather. Interestingly, when Yamuna joined me at Hind Motor after my return from UK, I had to take a loan from Provident Fund to meet the essential expenditure for starting living separately with her at TH 47. I didn't have any saving in the bank. Was I a fool till then? I kept on providing financial aid to Nand Kishore Chacha till the kids

came and grew even without consulting Yamuna. It was a one sided endeavour to maintain the relation with all in the joint family. However, I don't any more repent for it. It was done with all good intentions.

I have followed only onething that my grandfather practised. I keep on doing my 'masaparayan' of Tulsidas's Ram Charit Manas (completing the recitation of the full book once every month), as my grandfather did. It has been going on for many years. I wish if I could do something concrete in his memory in our village.

I also followed his habit of writing diary for few years. It was me who had persuaded him to change over to Hindi. Initially Baba used to write in English. I find today that his entries into the diary were more like my blogs giving news and his views on many issues. It's really an interesting reading. I have six of them of six years. The pages are full with quotations, important national and international news in brief, stories related to festivals and its history and social problems.

Lakshmi Baba in his last days had wished to have a house in town. Over the years all that has happened. Two of my sons are having three houses between them in US. I have, as on today, one in Noida. Nirmal has also a house in Varanasi and Alok is building one in Sasaram.

It's his blessings that all our children are pretty well educated and settled.

## **Jamuna Baba I Respected**

Jamuna Baba started managing the family land and cultivation at very early age right after his father's death. He was soft spoken and very generous. I remember some uniqueness of Jamuna Baba. In morning after milking the buffaloes, he would leave our house at Pipra and go straight to Rampur, the next village where we had the major landholdings and a house. I wondered if he at all slept. I found him responding to any little sound in the night. He was early riser too.

I found in my childhood Jamuna Baba as the most respected person in the villages all around and sometimes beyond too. Every night we used to see quite a few unknown guests from distant villages taking shelter in our courtyard and getting bed and food. The story of hosting and feeding the whole marriage party going to a nearby village on a hot summer afternoon made him legendary. Once Mangla Rai, the respected wrestler of Joga in eastern UP came for the marriage of his son in a nearby village. The name of Yamuna Baba was so well-known in those days that he called only Jamuna Baba in his tent and met him.



Me and Jamuna Baba in Pipra

Jamuna Baba perhaps had hardly any schooling. But he had an immense knowledge about contemporary events of history. In conversation in my school and college days, Jamuna Baba would ask about World War II, Stalin, Hitler, Churchill and even Mussolini about whom even I knew very little. When Russia sent Sputnik and again American spaceship landed on moon, he was very inquisitive. In IIT days, Jamuna Baba would advise me to take some grapes. Perhaps, to him that was the best fruit. He never realized that we could hardly afford all that luxury.

I could get a feel of his love for me whenever I visited village during holidays from school or college or even after I started working in Hindustan Motors. He would never allow me to draw water from the well for bath or even handle the hand pump when it came. When I would resist him from doing that, he would instruct Yugeswar Chacha to do that who was younger to me. He would depute a man for massaging me in night before sleeping. In morning he would call me when he would be milking the buffalos and offer a glass of frothed milk to me. He knew I loved it. He would ask the women folks in the family to prepare some good food. How can I forget those sweet moments?

As I remember he had a wish for himself and the family. We kept a good horse for some years. He considered that an expensive to maintain. He wanted to maintain a Tonga or buggy with a pony for his transportation. Unfortunately, it didn't happen at that time.

Baba was a real self respecting person and never wanted to seek any favour from others. In those days in crop time, there used to be a lot of feuds for sharing the water of the canal for irrigation. He bought or exchanged land, got drains dug in such a way that he could take water to all the family's fields without asking anyone's favour. The family had lot of landholdings spreading in at least three villages from south of Pipra to Rampur at the centre and extending up to Pipri in the north, even after the abolition of Zamindari system in 1952.

Ours was a happy joint family but for Jamuna Baba's wife. He himself was pretty shore about it. He loved my father and uncles very much. Mostly they lived in the village with him. His own son, Mukterwar Chacha was living with my grandfather for schooling. It was he who arranged and negotiated marriages of all my uncles. My grandfather never interfered with him. For many marriages such as one of Nand Kishore Chacha, he came straight to Laduee from Birlapur. Jamuna Baba and uncles managed everything and made all arrangements. And Jamuna Baba had immense and exemplary respect for his elder brother. He would take care of all the conveniences of Lakshmi Baba when he visited the village during the holidays. I remember one intruder in our family tried his best to bring division between the two brothers and he had to fail. Lakshmi Baba never raised any question to whatever Jamuna Baba did. And Jamuna Baba never tried to do anything that causes a rift that causes rapture.

Unfortunately, because of the poor yield and very low prices of the produce in those days, our farming was never making much money as it does now. None of the family members really worked as per the prevalent practice in those days. Expenses were totally uncontrolled. Jamuna Baba kept on selling the land to pay loans taken for different reasons. Ultimately that became the shore point and the charge of running the affair was given to Nand Kishore Chacha when he came back to the village after leaving the job there. But finally it caused bitterness between the generations. The joint family underwent division in two. It had happened after the death of Lakshmi Baba.

Jamuna Baba had once visited me in Hindu Hostel when I was in Presidency College. He had come to Birlapur for treatment for his piles. He also came once in Hind Motor accompanied by my mother and a Brahmin couple of Bodarhi for the pilgrimage to Ganga Sagar and Puri. Yamuna, my wife, accompanied them to Ganga Sagar and later on to Puri too. Baba was very much impressed by Yamuna and kept on talking about the smart way she managed everything in their Puri trip till he lived. In the last years of life, he had started living in Rampur.

## **Our House in Village Pipra**

My family house had a huge spread going into four courtyards. However, the roofs all over were covered with khaprel and naria (baked rural terracotta tiles). The southernmost was for male and the cattle. At one time, we used to have some 10 bullocks, two-three buffaloes and even one very good horse for few years, a status symbol in those days similar to a car at present. Actually the first horse came as a dowry from my maternal uncle Late Ramakant Rai, the brother-in-law of

Nand Kishore Chacha of nearby village Laduee. Laduee is the next village in south of Pipra. In the summer evenings, after the sprinkling of water drawn from the well in the corner and all the cattle in their places, the courtyard presented a great ambience. Many a times, some persons used to entertain us all with magic, enchanting stories and local songs. In evening many from among the villagers would come just for chatting. I still remember the evening when I requested my grandfather to ask 'Palawan Sahib' Rajneti Rai, the senior, to show us some of his miracles. Interestingly, he complied. He enquired Radhika Rai, another villager sitting on one cot there if he had some pure silver coins in his pocket. Naturally Radhika Rai was bewildered to hear that. But on search, one of my uncles found five old silver coins in his pocket. I don't know how he did it. Was it a trick or was he having some special power that he claimed to have acquired? As many thought, Rajneti Rai had a spirit under his control who did everything that he wished.

There was a very old well in the compound and there was no gate. One night, when we were sleeping, there was a loud thud. The well had collapsed. Yamuna Baba got the new well dug in one corner. After the division, Nand Kishore Chacha got its ownership. Over the years, it has undergone a major reconstruction. Alok has given it a modern look and provided with all facilities.



New Courtyard of Residence owned by Nand Kishore Chacha now

The next courtyard was one for cattle and cattle feed. However, there was a room in one corner with a sub-room in it. Juthan Baba lived in that till his death. He lived a very long life and that too very lavishly. The room was having few chests with all types of papers, old books, court documents and some souvenirs. I used to sneak into it in my childhood and used to look at the old papers. And all those got thrown out in absence of someone who could appreciate it. Even today, I really feel sorry for it. I do also remember the extra care taken by Yamuna Baba, when the portion was getting demolished to construct a new one in its place. Yamuna Baba expected some hidden treasures from inside the wall or the floor, as the old persons kept their savings that way in those days without telling anyone. Alas! Nothing came out to make him financially



affluent. Nirmal, son of Raj Kishore Chacha owns this portion. While from the outside it gives a glimpse of the old structure, the inside has changed. Nirmal has built a small house in one side.



In the courtyard of Nirmal's new residence

On the eastside of the second court yard was a long two-storied hall with three-four good beds (mostly received in dowry) and just two small windows where all the male members used to sleep. The mud wall was almost three-four feet in width that kept the place pretty comfortable even in very hot summer. The portion is now part of Nirmal's residence in Pipra. Nirmal has bought a house in Varanasi. He comes and lives in Pipra only to supervise his farming.

The rooms in the third courtyard were for the ladies. It had a small platform in the middle that was worshipped as a place of Lord Shiva. The family used the place during marriage or for any religious function.

Recently, I discovered some photographs taken in late 1960s of the courtyard that showed the room where I was born. Basically that room was very auspicious so was used for the delivery for all the children before and even after me. Interestingly, this was also the room with 'kohbar' drawn on its wall where all new brides used to enter on the first day in this family.

One can see the rural old appliance (Dhenki/ka) that was used to make rice from paddy. In another, my grandmother appears to be enjoying her hooka with a granddaughter in her lap and a neighbour. The third photograph relates to the first two girls, my cousins sisters as kids.



Third Court Yard- Janani Kitta (Yamuna in veil)



In the third courtyard, My grandmother on right with mother of Basdeo baba



The third and fourth courtyards are with grandsons of Jamuna Baba.

The fourth one was vacant with some trees of pomegranate and lemon. I once had fell down from a pomegranate tree.



In the vegetable garden of my small plot near Panchayat Bhawan of the village

I gave my share of inherited farm land to Nand Kishore Chacha at whatever price he paid, though some well-wishers from the family and village suggested me to sell it to whosoever paid the most. I never wanted to put it on public sale. Chandamani Mama got the settlement legalized after I got the indemnity document signed by my three sons in US.

I have only a small plot of land in north of panchayat house in my name, but remains in the effective control of Nand Kishore Chacha. Alok grows vegetables and keeps all the cowdung and garbage. This land had come to me for building a house on it. I don't know why I didn't get anything from the ancestral house. As I know, Yamuna Baba had acquired this land. I hope its ownership remains in my name. Sometimes, I feel like getting a big stone placed at its corner saying, ***'The land belongs to Indra Roy Sharma alias Dhanatar Rai, son of Shiw Pujan Rai alias Sanmukh Rai who was the eldest son of Lakshmi Prasad Rai.'*** Time and again, I have expressed my view to retain it on record as well as physically. May be one day someone from my clan in USA who wish to find out the root comes back to India.

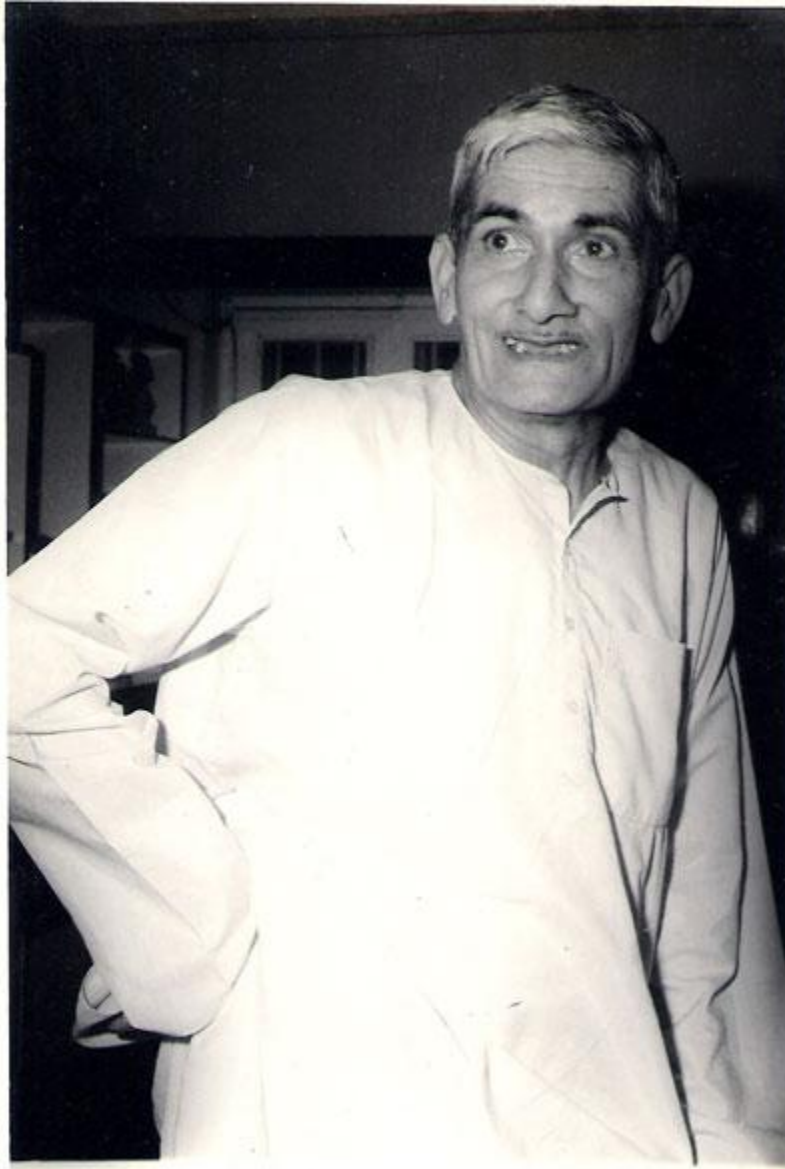
Many a times I wonder, why did Nand Kishore and Raj Kishore Chacha banish me out of the old residential complex of the family with which I was emotionally attached perhaps more than them? It pains because Babuji, Mai and myself have always helped the family more than any of them without asking for anything. Why didn't they ask for my views? Was it just because I had built houses in Bodarhi and in Calcutta and then in Noida?

I am happy otherwise but get really pained when I think about the greed around, which goes for grabbing the small plot in my name.

### **Babuji- the luckiest person**

The acquaintances addressed my father by many names- Bachha, Sanmukh, and ShivPujan Rai. I missed to ask the elders in the family in time how the name Sanmukh came. But 'Bachha' was a very popular word used for kids by elders. I was born around 10PM in the night on the 29August, 1939. I don't know if the date is correct. However, I could get the almanac of the year in the family papers. Lakshmi Baba has recorded it as 'Monday, Shravan Krishna Chaturdashi Sambat 1996 Vikramiya'. But one Maithil pandit, who went through the *panchang* of the year preserved by my Lakshmi Baba, established it as August 14. I remember my grandmother telling me an incident of my birth. A meeting of villagers was in progress on the 'gadh' (ancient mud mound) of our village. My grandfather was also attending the meeting. The messenger came and announced, '*bachha ho, bachha ka bachha bhaeel ba*'. First 'bachha' was for my grandfather, the second for my father and third one for me.





Portraits of Babuji

According to the record preserved by my grandfather, Babuji was born on Wednesday, 'Magh Purnima 1977 Sambat'. It will be 1920 AD. That means I was born when my father was 19 years of age. Going by the same record of my grandfather, Lakshmi Baba was born on Wednesday, 'Magh Shukla Dwitiya Sambat 1960' that will be 1903AD. So Babuji was born when Lakshmi Baba was 17 years of age. Are these not interesting facts?

I don't remember my father talking to me in my early childhood. I was even pretty shy, rather afraid to go in front of him when he would be in house for his meals. In those days in a joint family, the fathers rarely showed their love with their sons openly. The grandparents, uncles and all the lady-folks of the family took care of the kids. I don't remember any instance of my interaction with my father of those childhood days. However, he would have been certainly

concerned about me. I remember one such instance of a later date. For the marriage of Raj Kishore Chacha, we were going to Taraon, another village about 20 kms from Pipra. I was in a bullock cart with Dukhi in control. Dukhi was one of our many *banihars*, the farm workers who used to work in our fields on annual contract basis. While crossing a river bed, the cart overturned. It was not a serious thing. My father was in another cart. I remember him enquiring Dukhi "Is my only son safe?" I would not have talked with my father even for a total of an hour before he came to live with my mother in Bodarhi in early 60s when Jagan Nana died.

I remember some of his some unique habits. He used to bath with at least 20 tumblers of water drawn from well, spend about an hour or more to put on *dhoti*, also used a lot of water in washing his hands after taking food. He loved to put on a number of black strings around his neck. Once I was in Pipra on a holiday. Chandramani Mama was also present. He being brother-in-law connived once I and my father garlanded with string of bells and beads meant in those days for bullocks. He took it sportingly. But then we saw a fire in one of the almirahs where we had our books. I remember him saying, it was only because we made fun of him.

My father assisted Jamuna Baba and respected him immensely. Since his young age, he started living in Rampur to take care of the cattle. He loved horse riding too. When we got a horse, its overall care was his responsibility.



S

Babuji with Kailash Rai and Rama Rai in Bodarhi House



During my HM days, as soon as I would reach Bodarhi for a holiday, my father would leave for Pipra. During my father's absence, I had to take care of the cow that my mother would keep for me and her grandsons. My father had a unique skill of getting all types of work done by his acquaintances without annoying any. He had a strong will-power. He left smoking for ever when he started living with us.

It was in early part of 1980s that I had to bring my father to live with us in Hind Motor. He was terminally ill, as he had damaged his lungs because of smoking. My mother couldn't have taken care of him in village. Thereafter, my mother would visit and live with us in between for some time. She was not ready to leave her farmlands.



Babuji with Yamuna, Rakesh and me

Living with us was difficult for my father but he managed well. I had arranged some persons working for me in HM from similar rural background to visit Babuji regularly to keep him entertained.



Babuji with Jamwant and Sotelal

Jamwant Rai was a senior supervisor in Transmission Plant. Sotelal was a worker in Axle Plant who massaged not only Babuji but me and my sons too. Ramji Pathak was an assistant in my office before Sotelal shifted to shop floor as machine operator. Rajratnam was from Andhra and came close to us when I was given the responsibility of car axle components.



Sitting- Babuji, Mukteswar Chacha, me and Sesar  
 Standing- Sotelal, Jamwant, Ramji Pathak, JPN Rai, Sambhu

Among the grand sons, Anand was very close to Babuji. He was very humorous. And even with not much formal schooling; he was very knowledgeable and kept on asking questions. I don't know about his schooling. But I have seen him reading for long hours. Yamuna once asked him jokingly. 'Babuji, as I heard, you were brought to Birlapur for schooling. When Babaji (my grandfather) insisted you to go to school, you said that you would jump in River Hooghly if he insisted. You went back to the village.' Babuji would laugh heartily and said, 'nahin beti, yah jhuthi baat hai' (no daughter that was wrong).



Babuji and Mai in Big Flat 4, November 1985





With Babuji and Mai



Babuji and Mai with Anand and Rajesh



Babuji with Anand



Three generations Me, Babuji, and Rakesh

In 1989, my mother died of cerebral attack. It was difficult for him. But he was very bold. He lived a normal life, though with a lot of medication. I used to go out of station on company's assignments frequently in those days. It used to be pretty worrying time. I remember once when I was in Hannover for a week for attending the machine tools fair, I couldn't sleep well any night. Any telephone for Rath, my colleague who was in the attached room would make me wake up. I would keep suspecting about some bad news about my father.

He lived for almost 12-13 years with us in Hind Motors. He never went outside the residence but for the medical reasons. I happened because of me. Once when Babuji had recovered after the treatment, someone took him to the market in the Hind Motor labour colony. Naturally, one of my acquaintances offered him sweets and snacks from the shop. He never refused. The story came to me a little exaggerated. I got annoyed, as it would have provided my colleagues some materials to talk against me. And that would reach up to top management. He came to know about my annoyance for his act. There after he never set his feet outside our flat. Perhaps as a parent one is to be pretty conscious about one's activity while living with one's own grown up child. But he remained content and happy. Every day on return from the work I would peep in his room and ask about him. He will smile and raise both the hands in blessing posture. Whenever, I went out of station, as Yamuna informed, he kept on enquiring about me.

His presence was fulfilling till he lived. It was a gradual decay of all limbs and systems. After about seven months of Mai's death, Babuji left the world on September 24, 1989. He was just 69.



Babuji (sitting) Mukteswar, Raj Kishore. Nand Kishore Chacha (L-R)

## **Mai- Mother Sacrifice**

My mother's name was Subhagi Devi, popularly addressed as Subhago Phua in Bodarhi. I adore my mother for the supreme sacrifices she made for me. I was the only child. I would have inherited pretty good share from the joint family. But my mother wanted for me much more in landed property.

According to my great grandmother and the grandmother, I was a pretty difficult child. I would insist my mother to come and feed me her milk on bed itself in the morning, when she would be busy in household works as the eldest and only daughter-in-law of her generation. Though annoyed immensely, she would come with dirty hands and oblige me. She had to cook. She had to clean. She had to take care of all elderly ladies. That was the practice, and my mother religiously did it all.

My Nanaji, Hari Rai was having six brothers including one step brother too who had separated pretty early and lived in his mother's village. I had seen three of them: Hari Rai, Jagan Rai, and Brahmdeo Rai, and one of the aunties of my mother.

My mother's aunty was the sister of my Nani, and thus my mother's Mausi. She was terminally ill. My mother and I went to Bodarhi, my maternal village when I was just a kid in a bullock cart. It took almost the whole day for a distance of 20 and odd kms. As mother said, I didn't miss Pipra and started enjoying living there. My Nanaji brought everything that I wished. After some months, the village had shown symptom of an epidemic that was very common in rural India those days. My Nanaji and my mother got concerned. A message went to my grandfather who happened to be in Pipra on holiday in Pipra. My grandfather came with three other persons, got me in the mango garden in the eastern part of the village and took me to Pipra, my paternal village. He had a mention of that in his diary. In Bikramgunj we had to stay for the night as we had missed the last train. I had cried for my mother while in sleep that night. Thereafter I came to my maternal village only rarely mostly accompanied by my grandfather. I never stayed for more than two-three days. When I grew up and started living in Birlapur (near Calcutta), I went to Bodarhi as she would give me a lot of money. She used to insist on me to stay for some more days with her. But I never found the village congenial for me. My mother kept on telling a story. Once my Nanaji asked me, "Whom will I love and play with if you go away." I bluntly told him, "Love Gopal, the son of Shri Sankar Dyal Rai". Gopal was a little younger than me. The old house of Nanji in Bodarhi shared a common courtyard with him. I preferred to spend most of my holidays in Pipra where there were many including my Sadhuain Aaji to love me and many of my age group including Nand Kishore Chacha to play with. I am sure Mai would have been feeling bad, but she never expressed it. She thought I was away from her only for schooling and to achieve bigger goal that was good enough a reason for the sacrifice.

My mother couldn't return to Pipra to live there. My mother's Mausi died first, and soon after that my Nanaji got an attack of paralysis. He wanted nursing that my mother could only provide. He remained bedridden till his death. She rarely came to Pipra. It was in my marriage in 1955 that she came to Pipra with Hari Nana for few days. And just after the marriage, she returned to Bodarhi. Hari Nana had gifted his share of the landed property to us. But even after the death of Hari Nana, my mother remained in Bodarhi for her uncle, Jagan Nana, as she had assumed the responsibility of the household.





Mai with Rakesh



Mai with Bibha and Ashok after their marriage



Top (L-R): Uma Chachi, Indu, and Yamuna; Sitting: Bibha, Mai and Lilawati

My father remained in Pipra. After the death of Jagan Nana on April 15, 1965, my father joined her in Bodarhi, but he remained dormant. She mainly controlled all the land related matters. She remained the 'malkin' of the family. I liked very much one aspect of her behavior. She would appear to be very angry and annoyed with my grandfather, uncles, and even the tenants of her land or workers. But after some time, she would become very kind and generous and give whatever they asked for, the money or grain.

When I got employed and started earning from Hindustan Motors. I tried to do what my mother wanted even against my wishes. She had some land in eastern side of the village that didn't have any irrigation facility. In one annual holiday, though I didn't have any experience I got a well dug for using the Persian wheel (Rehant) for irrigation. No one helped me. I searched for the labour (nonias). Sometimes, I myself worked physically too to expedite the completion. I could see the happiness that mother got out of my interest in getting the work done. The well got ready. She got pleased and that I cherish. And then she wanted a house to be constructed on the outskirts of the village where we had our land. Our old house was inside the village and too cramped.

I started the construction of the new house after getting bricks made a year earlier. I wanted a big enough modern house, built with all facilities with a hand operated pump inside the bathroom and toilet inside the house itself. I had to invest all that I had saved for the education of the three kids. I really worked hard and Yamuna too. Cement was scarce in those days. The trouble in



building the house can be appreciated only by those who had experienced it. I went up to the cement factory at Banzari near Rohtas Garh alone in search of cement, but failed in the mission. I bought suspect quality in small lot from different places. I reached many a times pretty late in night carrying the stone chips or other building materials. My mother would not like it and worry about my safety. But in my youth I did never care about anything to happen with me. My mother got completed the house.



Bodarhi House that we built



Mai with Rita in courtyard of Bodarhi house

My mother was very happy and I was happy to see her happy. I planned and arranged a seven days Yagya with Siva as the main deity at Bodarhi after the completion of the house. That was

the time when our car with me in driving seat overturned and toppled near Asansol, while we were going to Bodarhi. Yamuna with the three sons, a servant and late Gauri Sankar Rai was in the car. We got some injuries. The car got badly damaged. Every one seeing the damaged car with no front glass would ask if any one survived. But we could start our Ambassador and reach Bodarhi on the next day afternoon. My parents performed the Yagya. I made all arrangements. On the last day, it was big feast with many relatives and all the village men and women whom I had invited by personally going to their house. My father had gone very weak because of the fast. My mother was very happy to see perhaps the first major function in her village. Unfortunately, it became the last one too. I took her to Varanasi also in my car one year from Bodarhi. Chandramani Mama and his wife accompanied us. I had myself driven her. I took her also to Pipra in my car to attend the last function when the wife of Jamuna Baba died. She would keep on talking about it with whom so ever she met.

My mother came to Hind Motor for the first time after the birth of Rakesh. Thereafter, my mother started coming more frequently. Many a year, Mai would be with us to take the lead in Chhuth. Yamuna went to Dev, a small village in Gaya to perform Chhuth. Mai joined us there from Bodarhi. She was the favourite of my sons. The call of duty and the attraction of Bodarhi would make her leave us and go to Bodarhi. I still remember the real touching scene with tears in my mother's eyes before boarding the train.



With Mai, my first photograph



Mai with three of her grandsons in New flat 15



Mai when came to Flat 4 in Hind Motor



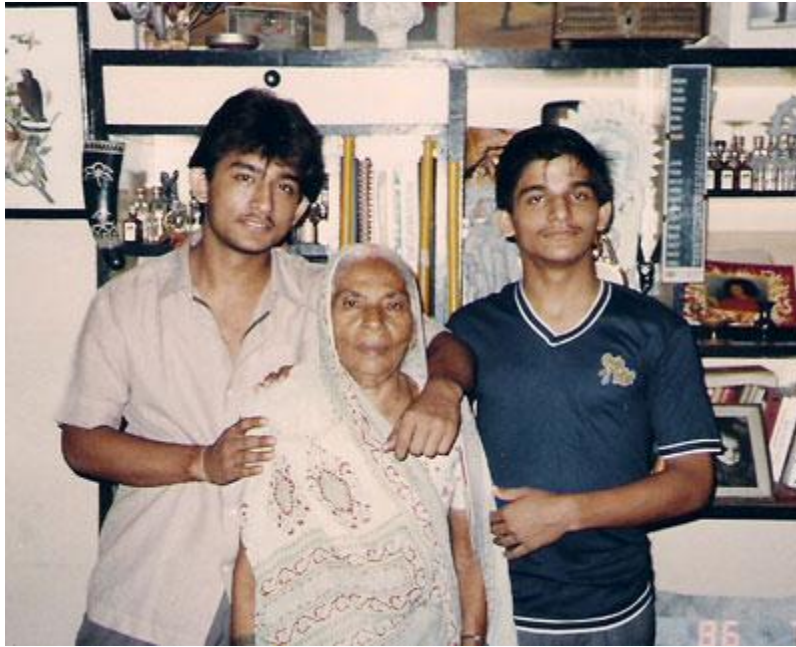
In 1982, I went to UK with Yamuna and stayed there for almost two months. Rakesh was appearing for School final. My mother took charge of the house and my ailing father and her grandsons in Hind Motor.



With Mai after a puja in Flat 4



Mai with Rajesh (L), Anand, Yamuna, Rakesh(R)



Mai with Rajesh (L) and Anand(R)



At Dakhineswar Temple L-R, Bibha, Mai, and Yamuna

It was only in 1988 that we made her leave Bodarhi to come and live with us in Hind Motors permanently. My father was with us because of his bad health. He couldn't go back. There was no point to leave my mother alone in Bodarhi. It used to be real worrying days and nights with

no facilities of telecommunication in those days. With the presence of my mother at Hind Motors, I found my worries about her gone.



Chhath in River Hooghly, Uttarpara Mai with Yamuna

Unfortunately, I failed to understand that she really loved to go back to Bodarhi with all the problems. In late 1980s, we were constructing our Salt Lake residence, AJIRA. My mother was very happy about the AJIRA project. She had been to Salt Lake house in Diwali to light the lamps and had stayed overnight.

Mai was also very happy as we have been working on to find a bride for Rakesh who was getting graduated from IIT, Kharagpur and going to US in few months. One could see her excitement whenever someone came with a proposal.



It was February 28, 1989. Yamuna had left for Salt Lake. I was fortunately in factory board room in a meeting of Corporate Project Planning. The news reached the office. My mother suffered a severe cerebral attack. I rushed home. I lifted her in my hands and came down the staircase. I called SK Roy Chaoudhry, my colleague who was passing by. He took us to Hind Motor Hospital. We sent message to Yamuna in Salt Lake through Mrs. Santi Singh. She returned and came straight to Hind Motor Hospital. But by that time, my mother had gone in coma. She never recovered. The same night she left us. My father took the news very boldly. A big crowd joined her last rites on Sivatala Ghat. The saddest day had come for me. I had to face it. I did everything for the last rites whatever my father wished in Hind Motors itself.



Mai with Rajesh, Rakesh, Anand, and Ashok

After the death of my mother, I had to sell the landed property of Bodarhi that she had owned with a lot of personal sacrifice. It became essential, as I couldn't have managed it from Hind Motor and saved it from the rogue relatives in the village who claimed to be the nearest to my maternal grandfathers by blood. None from the sides of Yamuna or my own family was ready to help me in keeping the property with me even after I had offered all sorts of incentives. They perhaps wished it to be handed over to them free. They didn't even help me in selling the same to get the best price or even the right price. I had to sell it myself sitting in Hind Motors for my own safety.

### **Unique Uncles**

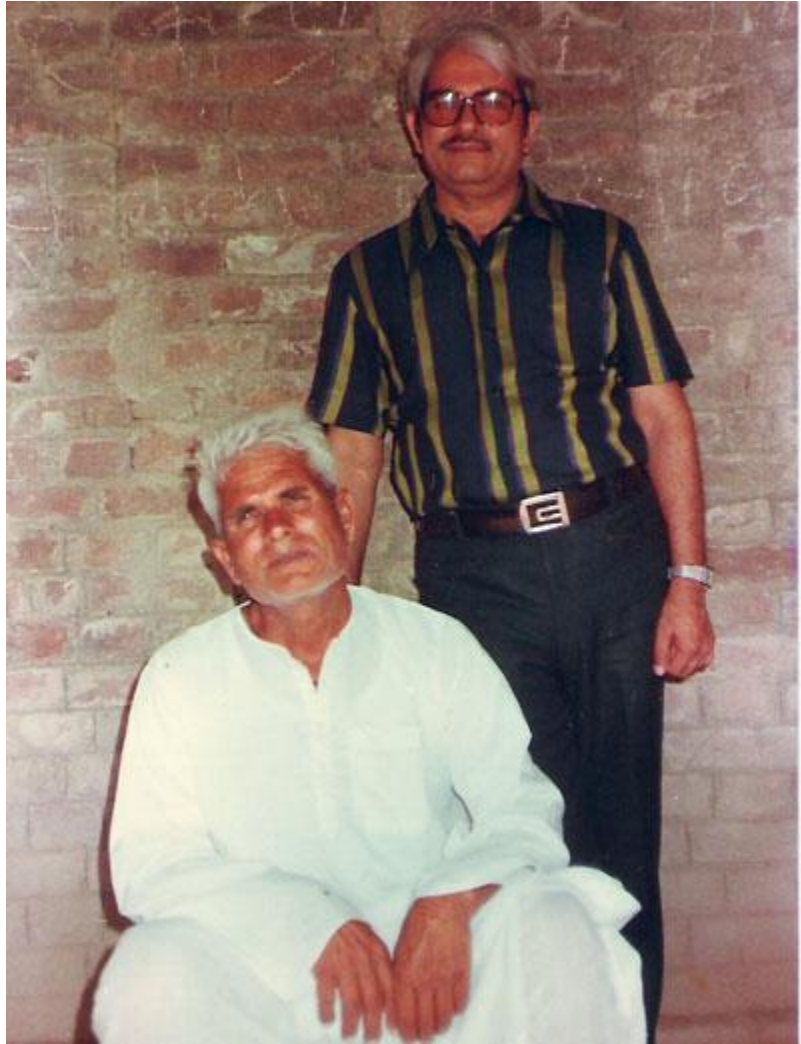
Raj Kishore Chacha was the most beautiful among his brothers. I remember slightly of his schooling. For middle school, he used to go to Kharadih some 3 kilometres from our village. He was married at very early age, as was the practice in those days, in the village of Manipur. I don't remember anything of that. I was small enough to join the marriage. But I do remember my aunty of Manipur. She was no match to Raj Kishore Chacha. She died in a cholera epidemic that inflicted the village. She was pregnant too. But the baby son couldn't be saved after her death. At that time of the year, we were for the first time in Birlapur with Sadhuain Aaji. It was in June 1947 that he got married again with Madhesari Devi, the only sister of Chandra Mani Mama. Chandra Mani Mama was the eldest son of Saraju Tiwari of Taraon. He had passed Intermediate examination in the same year. I went to Taraon for the marriage. We had got a very good bullock as gift in that marriage from Taraon.

My new Chachi was very beautiful, the suitable match for Raj Kishore Chacha. My Chacha also loved her very much. I do remember how happy he used to be in those years.

I was having my education at that time in Pipra. Raj Kishore Chacha started graying very early. He would in those very often ask me to remove the gray hairs. I never knew at that time that I would also be graying very early like him.



Raj Kishore Chacha



Me with Raj Kishore Chacha at Pipra

I have already written about Raj Kishore Chacha and his business failings. But I can't but add some more about Raj Kishore Chacha. He used to keep and maintain a good stock of clothes, beds, quilts and other household accessories mainly for making the guests visiting us. As a practice, he would make beds for all the male members in the courtyard or dalan (hall where we slept). He was fond of sweets and fast food. He was the most beautiful among all the family members and tender too. He couldn't tolerate even a slight amount of fever. He never did anything that could any way hurt the feelings of his own or even cousin brothers. He knew everything about everyone else, but hardly anything that could help the family to sustain it with honour. In young age, he was a follower of socialist party.

During Rakesh's marriage in 1993, Raj Kishore Chacha with Chachi was listened to the recitation of scripture, 'Bhagwat' for seven days in AJIRA, Salt Lake. He participated in the marriage of Rakesh and Alpana in Jamshedpur too.





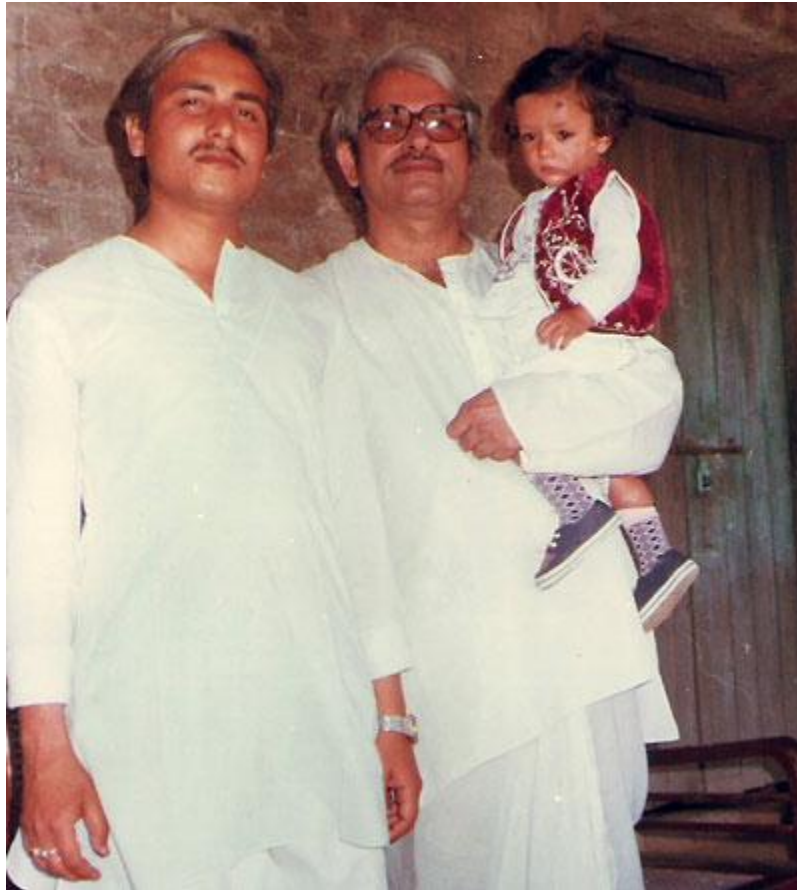
Raj Kishore Chacha at AJIRA listening to Scripture in 1993



Rakesh, Raj Kishore Chacha, Ramji Misra towards Jamshedpur



Raj Kishore Chacha was gifted with one son Nirmal and two daughters, Indu and Sabya. I got Nirmal employed in Hindustan Motors as a management trainee. But pretty soon Nirmal with his post graduate from BHU (now Ph.D) decided to be in education and joined a private college. He has two sons- Babloo and Bunty and a daughter Babli.

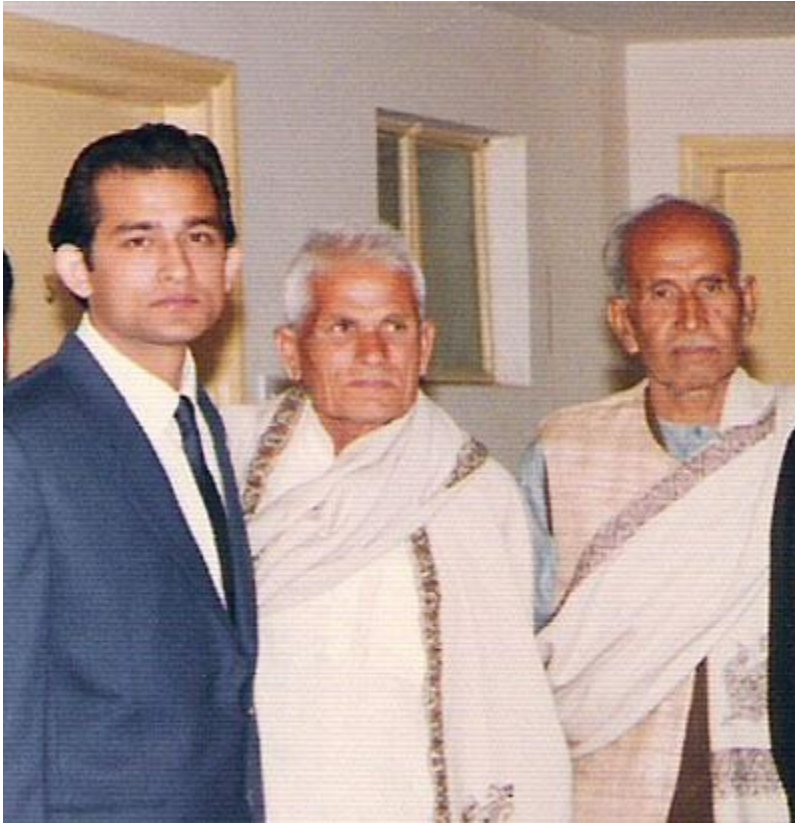


With Nirmal



Indu (right) and Nita (left) as kids in the second courtyard

I tried to keep him happy in the last days of his life with small little monetary assistance that he expected from me. He wanted to pay back the dues he had from lender. He was grossly diabetic. It was on January 20, 1998, Raj Kishore Chacha left this world at the age of 69. I felt sorry when I came to know of that in Noida. He deserved better treatment. But for someone living in a village like Pipra with no healthcare facility even after decades of independence, one can't think of a longer life. If someone lives a longer life, it is just an exception.



Left: Rajesh with Raj Kishore Chacha and Mamaji, Right: Nirmal with Raj Kishore Chacha In Rakesh's marriage in Jamshedpur

Nand Kishore Chacha got married in 1949 itself. We were attending the village school in those years. One teacher of our community, Shri Ganga Dyal Pandey had come as government teacher. Lakshmi Baba requested him to live with our family and tutor us. Pandeyji was very good teacher. He transformed us in many ways. We became vegetarian. He taught us about the Independence war and the sacrifices that so many of the country men and women made for independence of the country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. He told us the story of the epics- Mahabharat and Ramayan. He made us memorize a lot from Maithili Saran Gupta's 'Bharat Bharati'. I was very good in antakshri with couplets from poems unlike one practiced now with cinema songs. I was in a class below Nand Kishore Chacha, but read only his books. I confess his huge contribution in building my academic and moral foundation. I could never find any other teacher like him afterwards. I insisted Lakshmi Baba to give Ganga Dyal Pandey his pocket watch that he longed. I feel sorry that I could not arrange a job for his son for which he had come to even Hind Motor.

I would have got married along with Nand Kishore Chacha. Shri Ganga Dyal Pandey liked me and wanted to get me married with one of his cousin sister. He had taken me and my Chacha to his village Manipur too. Ganga Dyal Pandey had made both my grand fathers agree for the marriage. At that age I hardly knew the meaning of marriage. I was very happy. Fortunately for me the girl side didn't come for the engagement on the day Nand Kishore Chacha was getting engaged with Umrawati Devi, the only daughter of Sita Ram Rai of Laduee. As per the practice, I was fasting. I don't remember if I got morose.

Both of Nand Kishore Chacha and me came to Birlapur in 1950 and got admitted in class VI. My grandmother accompanied us this time. After many decades, she had come for the first times to live with Lakshmi Baba. Chachaji was weak in English, failed the examination and couldn't continue in Birlapur Vidyalaya. Thereafter, Lakshmi Baba arranged his admission in the school in Pilani. Birlas ran a big school in those days under a scheme for education for the children of the employees of its companies. It was free education with all expenses including some pocket money paid by the trust of the companies. Lakshmi Baba had also sent Mukteswar Chacha to Pilani under the same scheme.

Unfortunately, both of my uncles couldn't take advantage of the scheme that many of my acquaintances in Birlapur successfully did. They completed their studies up to post graduate level and got respectable jobs in the factory. Can we call it destiny?

Everything was going alright with Nand Kishore uncle in the school of Pilani. Phones were unthinkable in those days. He had been writing letters regularly with many good things of the school life. But suddenly, we received one day a long telegraph from the school authority. The uncle was sick for some time there and that was taking time to cure. But as I remember, the telegrams in those days used to be considered as something very serious. My grandmother insisted Lakshmi Baba to go and bring back my uncle. My grandfather had to yield. While returning from Pilani, my grandfather visited Birla temple in New Delhi.



Nand Kishore Chacha (extreme left) and Lakshmi Baba (extreme Right)

Lakshmi Baba was really shore with all that had happened and he didn't send my uncle back to Pilani's school after he recovered. Unfortunately, my uncle couldn't pursue his formal education. Let me confess when I look back, he would have become a very good engineer. He had a wonderful mechanical mind to repair any gadgets in domestic use. We used to call him 'engineer'. My grandfather got him employed in the Birla Jute Mills. I remember he bought a costly wrist watch out of his earnings. My grandfather made him part with that when I joined HM against his wishes. I felt bad about it, but couldn't resist the temptation of getting it. Finally I had given the watch to Suresh Phupha in marriage, as he asked for it.

Later on Nana Kishore Chacha became teacher in the primary section of Birlapur Vidyalaya. Lakshmi Baba actually retired to give him his job. As everyone of the school management respected baba so much that they had agreed.



Nand Kishore Chacha left Birlapur and took the charge of the landed property at Pipra. We all including Mukteswar Chacha wanted and supported the idea. He started very enthusiastically and did well. He bought the first tractor in the village. The yield improved. But soon he started taking a little too much interest in village politics at the cost of farming. Ultimately he won the Panchayat election to become Mukhiya, the headman. But his interest in improving the financial condition of the family became secondary. He kept on demanding more assistance from me. He even criticized my way of living and expenses in Hind Motor. With my meager salary and expenses on my ailing parents and my growing children, it was hardly possible to satisfy his demand, though I kept on helping him even after Yamuna joined me in 1966. But unfortunately it was one sided affair. He would have helped me in managing and retaining the landed property in Bodarhi or later on, in getting better price for it.



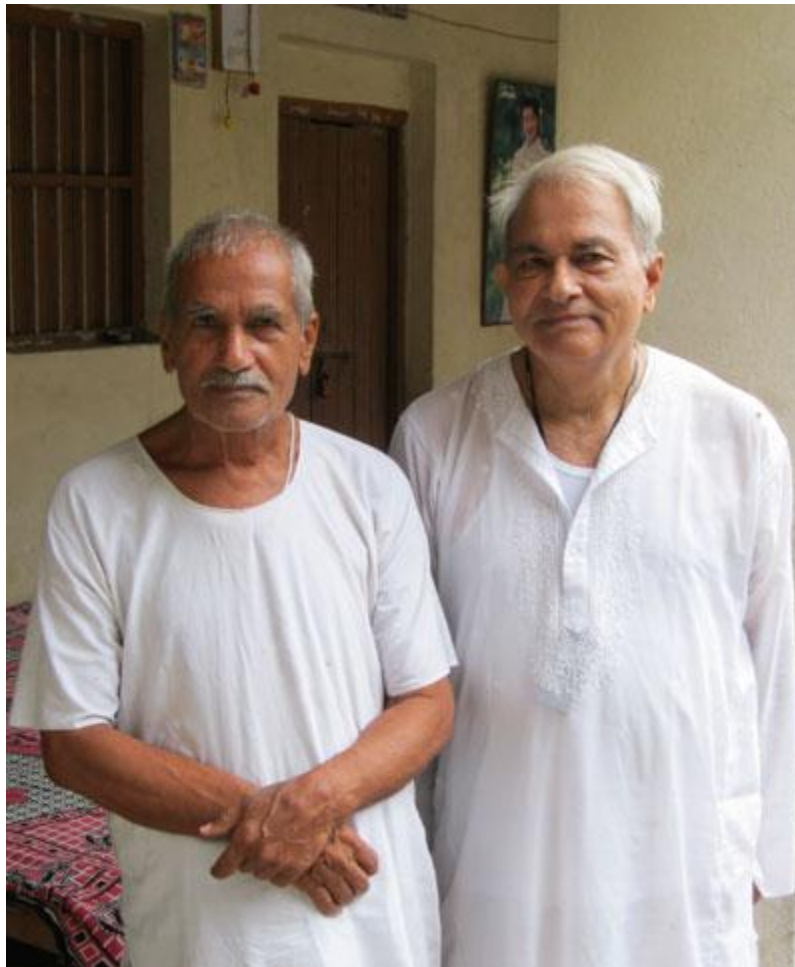
Nand Kishore Chacha and Me in Holi at Pipra

Though Yamuna keeps on talking about that, I don't have any malice or repentance for the same. Whatever I did was my duty for the family. I supported him for all his actions, many times even after I knew he was not right. My uncles never took my opinion when they agreed to have division of the inherited property. But I complied with whatever they decided. He is the only among the generation of the family alive. I respect him and share many of my ideas with him.

Nand Kishore Chacha is gifted with two sons-Ashok and Alok and two daughters-Nita and Rita. Ashok got his law degree from BHU, and today employed in Indian Railways at a very respectable position. He has two sons- Deepak and Prakash, both doing Master in engineering and a sweet daughter Jyoti who is busy in completing her Master in Human Relations from MS University, Vadodara. Alok with a Master degree in agriculture takes care of the family farm.

Additionally he is now employed in Bihar government too. He must get the credit of making the farming a viable option for living. He is doing unexpectedly well.

Mukteswar Chacha lived in Birlapur almost for full of his life. He was a good footballer in his school days. If he would have got opportunity, he could have run any business well. For some time, he used to set up a hosiery stall in weekly market. He could do a good business. Unfortunately he couldn't and focus and take decision. Later on, he got employed in a division of Birla Jute Mills and remained in the job till his retirement. He was very much known in Hindi speaking staffs and workmen of Birlapur for his interest in music and drama that he organized and directed. He was tall and good in communicating in English. For some time he even practiced wrestling. Even in my village, he was very popular and could win votes for Nand Kishore Chacha when he contested for the position of village head in a fierce contest. He got a water tank dug one year in the village under his leadership. Unfortunately, the village men couldn't protect and maintain it.



With Nand Kishore Chacha in 2010

Mukteswar Chacha was three years senior in Birlapur Vidyalaya and passed School final Examination in 1952. He was a good football player too and was part of the school team. I

remember one episode of living with Mukteswar Chacha in Birlapur. One day Lakshmi Baba was away for tuition. Mukteswar Chacha used to cook before going to school. He had finished other items and had put rice in an aluminium utensil on the coal-fired stove (chulha). As he was getting late, he asked me to take care of the rice and to remove the utensil from the stove after sometime. I was reading something and forgot. I could realize my mistake only with strong smell of the burning rice. The pot had melted. The water had dripped and the rice was burnt totally. On return, he didn't say anything rather took blame on him when my grandfather enquired about it. He spared his bicycle for me when I went to IIT, Kharagpur where I needed it, as the class rooms from Azad Hall were pretty far.

After school final, Mukteswar Chacha couldn't pursue higher education and after working for short durations in different places, he started working for Birla Jute Mills. He ended up with its Staple Fibres division. Mukteswar Chacha got very popular among the Hindi speaking population of Birlapur because of his organizing and directing Hindi plays and musical soirees.



Me with Babuji, Mukteswar Chacha and Rakesh

Unfortunately, Mukteswar Chacha was a chain smoker and that too of cheaper brands. It spoiled his health badly. He would not take medicines. No amount of advice could make him change his habits.

Mukteswar Chacha was a good family man and very good leader. Whenever he visited Pipra, many people would throng around him. He helped building a water tank and renovating the Kali temple. He would organize drama and other functions with the young boys of the village. Nand Kishore used to call him for campaigning during his Mukhia election.

All the four brothers of my father including Mukteswar Chacha had a unique quality that I hardly find in the brothers now. They respected each other and took care of the mutual needs. I have never found them getting into conflicts with the property matters or fighting for anything or using even a harsh word against each other. Anyone could sacrifice anything for the other. I wish my three sons to keep the example in mind that will make me the happiest.

Mukteswar Chacha got married first when he was a child with the daughter of Ramanand Tiwari of Mandauli. I was taken to the village for his second marriage. I remember that while returning, the pony that was carrying me, sat in the water stream of small rivulet Kau on the way. Mukteswar had a daughter from his first wife. But he was not very happy with her. Mukteswar Chacha had a second marriage with Uma Devi of Mohanpur in 1960s. Mukteswar Chacha got the happiness of life. They got gifted with two sons-Pradip and Golu and four daughters from the second wife. Pradip works for Birla Corporation and still lives in Birlapur where my Dadaji had started and many of us grew up and got educated. The eldest of the daughters was Seema, a year older than Rakesh, my oldest son. Unfortunately, she is a widow but lives on her own as a respectable teacher.



With Pradeep's son in Birlapur



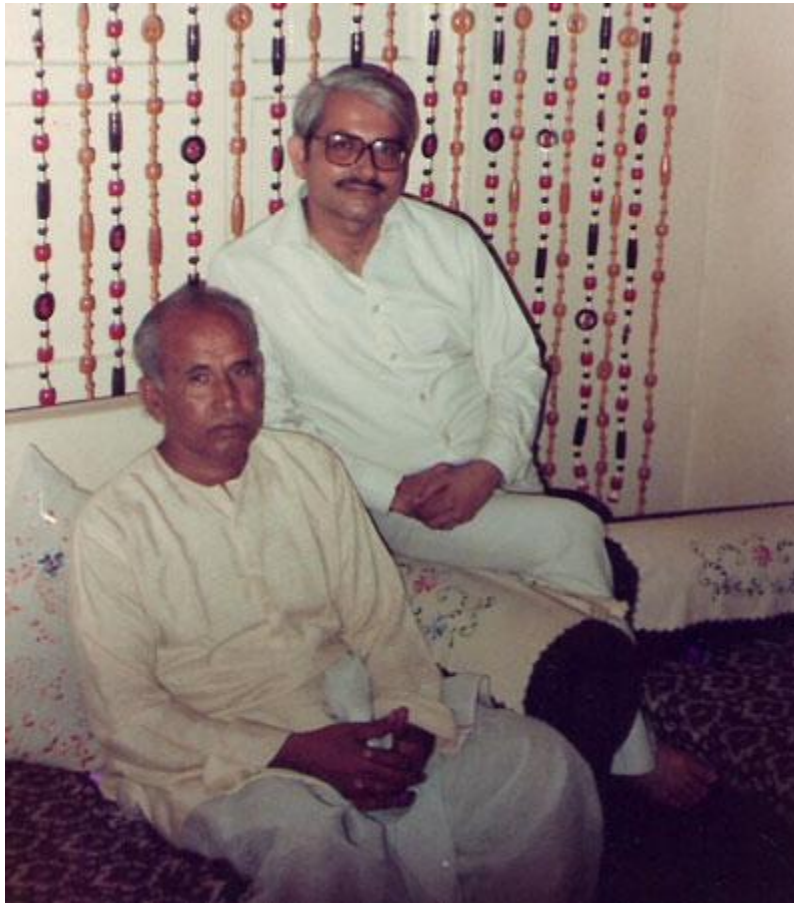


Pradeep's factory in Birlapur

## **Mamaji I Adore**

Chandramani Mama, the brother-in-law of Raj Kishore Chacha has remained a father figure for me since the death of my grandfather. He has been a reputed advocate by profession. He has been a highly versatile and well-informed person with an opinion of his own on almost all contemporary issues and subjects. As advocate, it was he who pleaded and won the legal cases that got me the right on my maternal property in Bodarhi. Since school days, his Sasaram house has been my transit camp to stop, rest and go whenever I travelled from anywhere outside to Pipra or Bodarhi and back. I keep him involved in everything I do and seek his blessings.





With Mamaji, Shri Chandramani Tiwari at Flat4

I remember him making a statement on my selection of educational streams and career path at various stages. “You would have gone for arts with humanities; instead you selected to study science after school final. After intermediate in science, you would have chosen medical science, but you decide to pursue engineering. In engineering, you would have picked up civil instead you took mechanical. While getting into professional career, you would have entered

government job instead you preferred private.” Today I find some truth in his conclusion but I consider that whatever happened was my destiny. Sometimes, I feel bad about those decisions that were not always mine. But it was through my hard work I could get what I deserved. I do also remember his advice against building a very big house in village Bodarhi. He was very right. I had to dispose of almost free as I could not have lived even for few days in that village of rogues and uncultured lot. Mamiji died many years ago. And Mamaji was around 87 and lived a totally retired life, moving between Sasaram and Ramnagar near Varanasi. His eldest son, Ramesh has built his house at Ramnagar and lives there. And the youngest one, Surendra continues living in the house that Mamaji built at Sasaram. Surendra is also advocate. Krishna, the second son was a doctor and was in Hind Motor for a long time. Now he lives in Risra in outskirts of Kolkata and practises there. All in my family has been very close to Krishna and his family. His daughter Khusboo, who graduated in engineering, is now married and settled in Bangalore.

In 1990s Mamaji was with us in Hind Motor for few days when he had to undergo surgical operation. He attended the marriages of Rakesh as well as that of Rajesh.



With Mamaji in 2010

And before I could complete the task of compiling this volume, the end came. I arrived in Sasaram for a function of Yamuna at Pipra on March 16, 2011. On station itself Alok informed me that Mamaji is in ICU in Varanasi. As such also as per the practice of years I would have gone to his house on Premchand Marg in Gaulakshini. Surendra, his youngest son handed over the 4 pages of the paper he had prepared before leaving for Varanasi to be handed over to me. Perhaps he was doubtful about his returning back to Sasaram in time to meet me as he used to do always.

On Saturday March 19, we went to Ram Nagar to see him. Ramesh, his eldest son lives there. We reached in time. Mamaji recognized me with abroad smile on his face. After a few seconds he started speaking and continued for almost 5-6 minutes. I tried to take the help of Surendra to understand. But neither I nor Surendra could understand anything. But he

had said whatever he wanted to convey. We left the place at 4 PM to return to Pipra. In the early hours of March 20 around 3.30 AM Mamaji breathed last time. A great soul went into eternal rest.

Among all our relatives, Ramakant Mama was very close to the family till his death. He was the only son in his family and inherited a lot of landed property. However, he was spendthrift and lived lavishly. He was fond of keeping his status high. As I remember, he kept a horse and then an elephant for some years. He used to play dholak and was fond of music. He was one of the most generous among our relatives too.



Ashok, Ramakant Mama and Me

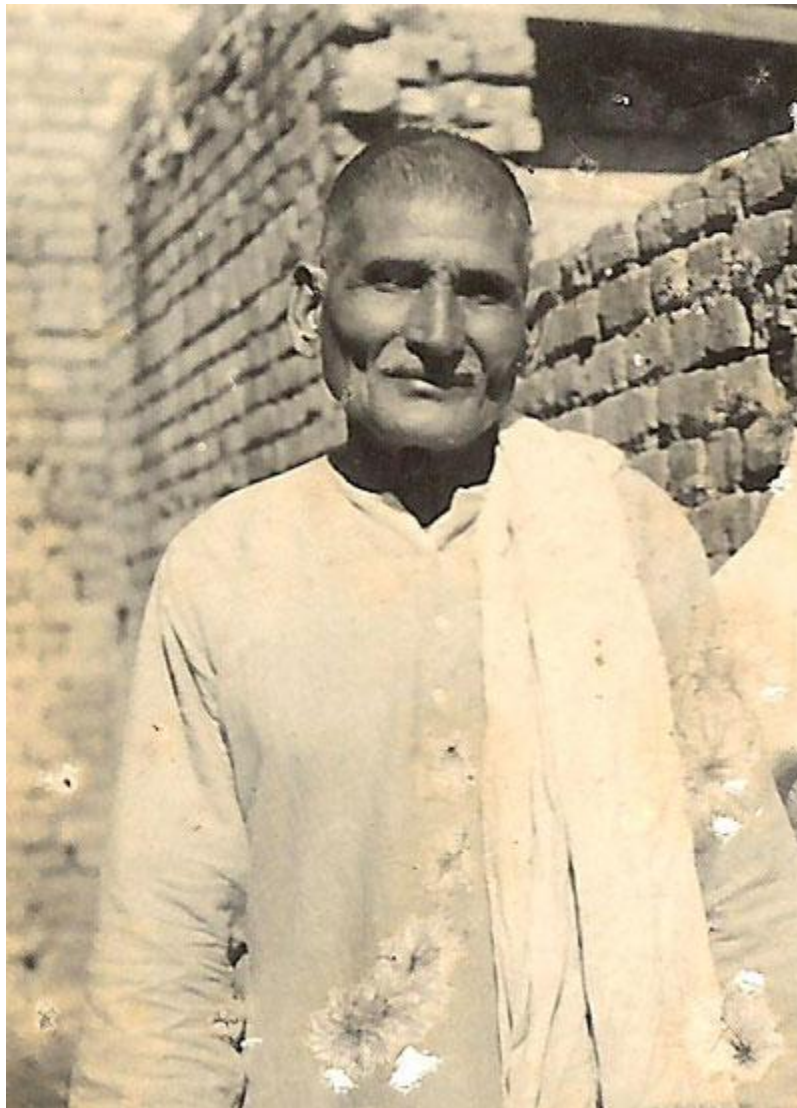
Ramakant Mama was a great host. I visited him number of times in my childhood. Ladui was the nearest village for all of us. And more than that, he was a great host, who used to give a real VIP treatment. I was very close to *mami*, who was asthmatic. She was from our neighborhood in Pipra. And the very old and frail *nani* was just loving.

Ramakant Mama had a daughter and a son, Bhola. Unfortunately, Bhola is a little handicapped from birth itself. But Bhola is lucky to have three sons and all of them are doing excellent.



## **Yamuna's family of Madhukarpur**

My father-in-law, Sitaram Misra was the lone surviving male child of his father, Ram Lakhan Misra. He had four sisters too. One cousin Lal Bihari was living separately. The mother of my father-in-law was very tough and quarrelsome who had distanced Lal Bihari from the family. My mother-in-law was from Dharkanha, a village nearby. She was very homely lady. She won over Lal Bihari and brought him again in the family fold. Lal Bihari took the control of the family. He was very intelligent and helpful to my mother-in-law in bringing up her children. My father-in-law didn't continue in school for long.



Sitaram Misra in our Bodarhi's old house

His mother, a widow by then, stopped him from going to school. As the story goes, the school teacher had punished her son. The family had a good land holding. The land was very fertile and well irrigated by canals built by Britishers. My father-in-law grew as adamant child of a rich



widow. He hardly understood the village politics and lost a lot of property because of the ignorance of the laws of the land before Lal Bihari came back to help the family.



Yamuna's father and mother

As Yamuna narrates, her Nani (maternal grandmother) came to Madhukarpur in disguise of a beggar to find out if my father-in-law was a good match for her daughter.

Yamuna had a big family from her parents, five sisters and three brothers- Shiv Prasad, Ram Bishal and Raj Kishore. Shiv Prasad Misra has been a teacher and now retired. Ram Bishal was the most beautiful among the brothers, lived with his father and helped him in farming. I got Raj Kishore employed in Hindustan Motors. He had abandoned schooling after his marriage. Yamuna's village Madhukarpur is a really small one with just five-six families. It is nearer to my mother's village, Bodarhi.

I had been to Madhukarpur only on few occasions. I have some old photographs of the family that I took at that time. I asked my father-in-law once a silly question: Whom do you love the most among your five daughters? He laughed only. Later on he had asked Yamuna what I was intending to know. I attended the ceremonies after his death. I really liked his simplicity.



Yamuna's father and mother



Yamuna with sisters and parent

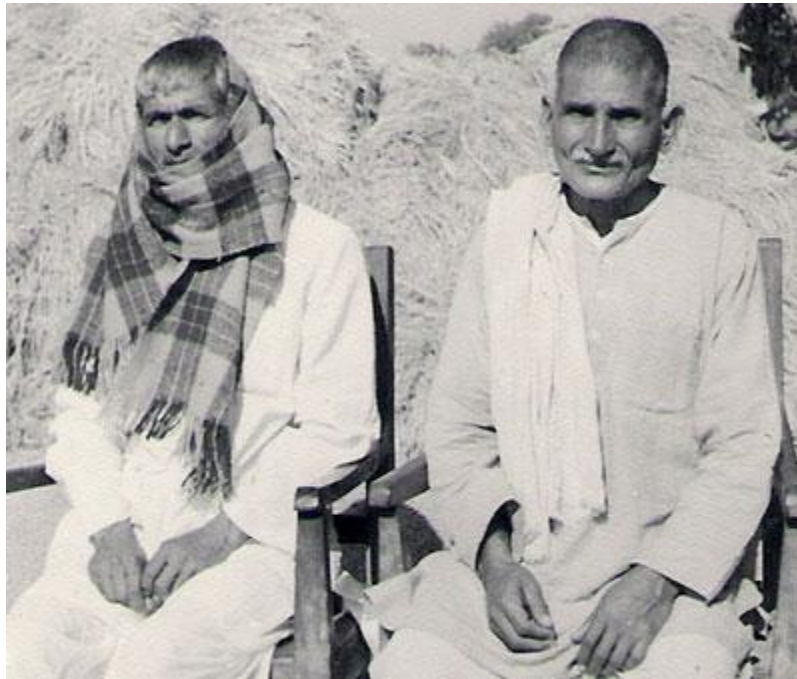
The only family in Bodarhi, who had helped us in getting the land of my maternal grandfather registered in my name, had married its daughter Sona with Ram Bishal. Sona must be a few years older than me. As Yamuna says, Sona had been narrating some story of my childhood. And according to that, I had played with her in Bodarhi. It was Ramjee Rai, Sona's father and his cousin brother Rama Rai who approached Jamuna Baba with the proposal of the marriage of Yamuna with me about the time when I was perhaps in class IX. They wanted to take advantage of the help they had provided. I appeared for my school final examination in 1955. Jamuna Baba consented even knowing well that I was not ready to marry. My grandfather had to relent. I had to reconcile. In the summer on June 14, 1955, we got married.



Ram Bishal with wife Sona

I remember and my grandfather had written in his diary (annexure). My marriage party came in bullock carts from our village with few palkins. My father came on his horse. My grandfather had hired a car, the usual Ambassador car to join the marriage at Madhukarpur. He reached Madhukarpur with Chandra Mani Mama and Ram Dular Rai whose family initially was from a village Rampur before his father migrated to Assam. The marriage was grand. Jamuna Baba had hired Chhotakaa Babbanwa (Babban, the younger) from Surajpura to entertain the marriage party. On my insistence, I was in plain dress. The villagers found it difficult to recognize the bridegroom.

My father-in-law, Sitaram Misra could visit and eat at our place only after the birth of his grandsons as per the practice in those days. Unfortunately, there was one thing common with both- my father as well as my father-in-law. Both used to smoke *ganza*. That was one thing that I hated. He visited Bodarhi many a times when Babuji started living there and Rakesh, my eldest son was born.



My Father with Sita Ram Misra, Yamuna's father in Bodarhi

Shiv Prasad Misra was very close to my mother and for some year he lived with her in Bodarhi when he was teaching in a nearby village. He has been real hard working and tough. Even at this age of around 80, he can work for few hours in field, though in sitting posture, because of his knee problem. I remember him visiting us in Hind Motor, going on feet to Tarkeswar for pouring Ganga water that was about 30 kilometres, returning (by train) and catching the evening train for village. He has seven daughters and two sons. Ram Bishal Misra has three sons and three daughters.



Yamuna with Shiv Ptasad (L) and Raj Kishore Misra

I had got Raj Kishore employed in Hindustan Motors and later on got an accommodation also in the company quarters. He has two sons and three daughters. Kiran was the second daughter. Raj Kishore is also retired and lives in his village. All the three brothers are now living and managing



their own share of the landed property separately. They all are well off. Their sons have taken over. Sona is no more in this world.

Yamuna was very close to her younger sister Girija. Suresh Rai, her husband was a junior engineer in PWD and has now retired and settled in Ranchi. They have five daughters and two sons. I had sent Yamuna to Ranchi once alone by flight to attend the marriage of one of her daughters.



Yamuna in Ranchi with Giriza and her 4 daughters

Unfortunately, in Yamuna's family, none could do well in education. Shiv Prasad Misra though himself a teacher failed to get his children educated. Children of Raj Kishore had a good opportunity in Hind Motor, but they couldn't take advantage of it. I really feel bad about it and keep on cursing them. Perhaps that was because of the destiny.

## **And Some Persons from my village**

I got a lot of love, affection and respect too from the elders in Pipra. I did also give them due respect whenever I visited Pipra. I had made a point to meet them as priority and take their blessings. Many have left this world, years ago. As I go down the memory lane, I get reminded of Haricharan Baba, the grandfather of Sheomuni Rai; Suruj Baba, the first ever Mukhiya; Janaki Baba, the father of Basdeo Rai, the wrestler and Deoo Baba who could quote from anywhere in Ramayan; and many with wonderful personalities.

I could photograph some of the earlier generation. Girija Rai was contemporary of Jamuna Baba and was a real nice man. Both used to meet quite often.





Me with Jugeswar Chacha and Girija Rai

Basdeo Rai and his brother Shyam Baran Rai became the first from the village to get their sons Sharda and Krishna Kant educated in engineering from reputed colleges. Sharda and Krishna both stayed with us for a month or so when we lived in new flat for vocational training in Hindustan Motors. They became favourites of Rakesh and Rajesh, as they gave many volumes of the popular Tintin. Later I arranged a job for Krishna in Hindustan Motors. Sharda still works for SAIL. But Sharda has remained indifferent with his other family members in Pipra and couldn't keep Basdeo Baba happy. Basdeo Baba keeps on complaining against Sharda in every conversation with me. In one of my visit, I donated for the idol of the main deity, Hanumanjii in the temple of Basdeo Baba as he desired. Even when I was in Pipra in 2010, he came and waited for a long time to meet me. I was out at that time to visit the newly built school. It is painful to find a strong person like Basdeo Baba disabled because of a paralysis attack. It was very difficult for him to use his hand to take sweets that my aunty had offered.



Basdeo Baba, Me and Shyam Baran Rai

Basdeo Rai was a wrestler in his young days. I remember him for his difficult questions that he used to ask. I couldn't prove and convince him that the earth rotates rather the sun.

Kamta Rai and Aliar Rai were cousins of Girija Baba of the same generation. I could photograph them in the marriage of Alok at Deoghar, Baidyanath Dham. Basdeo Rai, Raj Neti Rai and Shiw Muni Rai are of the next generation, one above mine.



Alok with Sulekha during marriage



Children of Nirmal, his sister Indu, and Ashok



Standing: From L 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, Jugeswar, Mukteswar, and Nand Kishore Chacha  
 Sitting: From L, Shyam Baran Rai, Aliar Rai, Basdeo Rai and Kamta Rai  
 (in marriage of Alok in Baidynath Dham, May 21, 1994)



From Left Kamta Baba, Kasinath Rai, Pramukhji of Pipradh, Baidyanath Dham. May 21, 1994

There were two persons the same name of Raneti Rai in the village whom I respected. Raj Neti Rai, the senior was a reputed wrestler as well as trickster. Rajneti Rai, the younger was the headmaster of Samahuta High School.

Sheo Muni Rai was very close to Lakshmi Baba. He is learned and very near to us. He was the closest neighbor too. He had been teacher all his life in Dalmia Nagar where my grandfather



lived and worked for few years before his death. Mostly, he remains in Dalmianagar only where he built his house.



Nand Kishore Chacha with Sheomuni Rai, March 2011

His eldest son, Indrajeet died early. One of his grandsons has become an advocate in Patna High Court. I met him once and I think he will go pretty high in his profession.

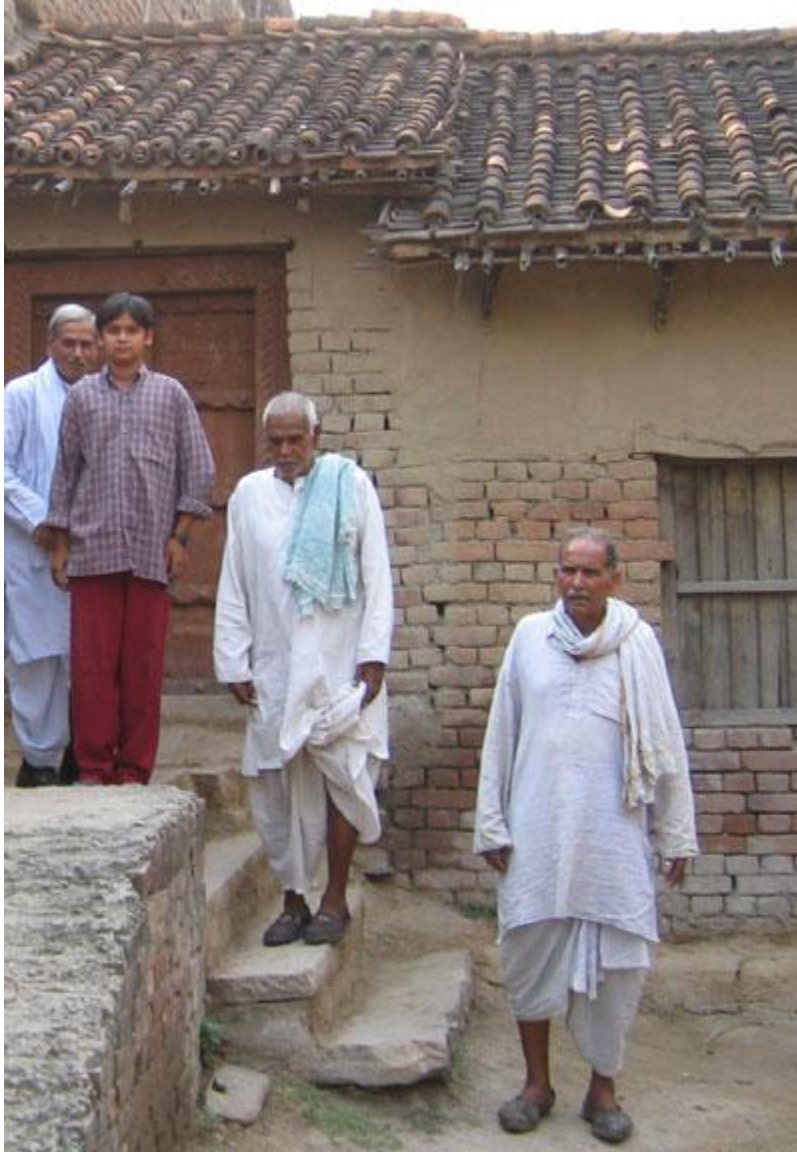
I try to meet and talk with every one whom I know, when I go to Pipra. In 2003 I met with Paltoo who used to work for us at one time.



Me with Paltoo in Pipra

Bhuwaneswar Rai is brother in relation and a next door neighbor. He is the only brother elder to me in the extended family of the village and close too. Shiv Shankar Rai is another neighbor in proximity of our house, I am close to the family since my childhood.





Chacha with Shiv Sankar Rai and Bhuwaneswar Rai

In 2010 I met Shri Chandi Rai, the eldest son of Girija Rai after many years. He has been English teacher in government school near Dalmianagar. I remember once I read with him Dinkar's 'Urvashi'.



Chandi Chacha, a teacher by profession, son of Girija Rai

Over the years, my love for Pipra and its people kept on increasing. I feel satisfied to certain extent that I could help some in getting jobs in Hindustan Motors. I always wished to do something for my village. On my every visit I discuss my projects. Many things can be done to make the village a better place. I discussed the same once with Jhanar Rai when he was alive. Somehow Nand Kishore Chacha and Alok think otherwise. As per them, nothing is possible in the village because of its local politics. I got amazed when Alok's wife who coaches children told me that there was hardly any interest in the so-called forward caste for educating their children, particularly the girls. I wish if I could see a higher secondary school and a health centre operative in Pipra.

## **Education**

### **Birlapur Vidyalaya That Shaped Me**

The first frame in my memory of Birlapur Vidyalaya is of one annual prize giving ceremony on a day in late 1940s. It was for the students who were top three in each class plus some having done wonderfully well in other competitions. Mahavir Prasad, the second in command of Birla Jute Mills at Birlapur was giving prizes to individual students. My grandfather was on the stage managing the ceremony. As usual, I kept hanging near him. My childlike insistence to Baba for getting one prize for me too, is still vivid in my mind. How could he do that? I had to work hard for that and in the following years to come I was always there among the prize winners.

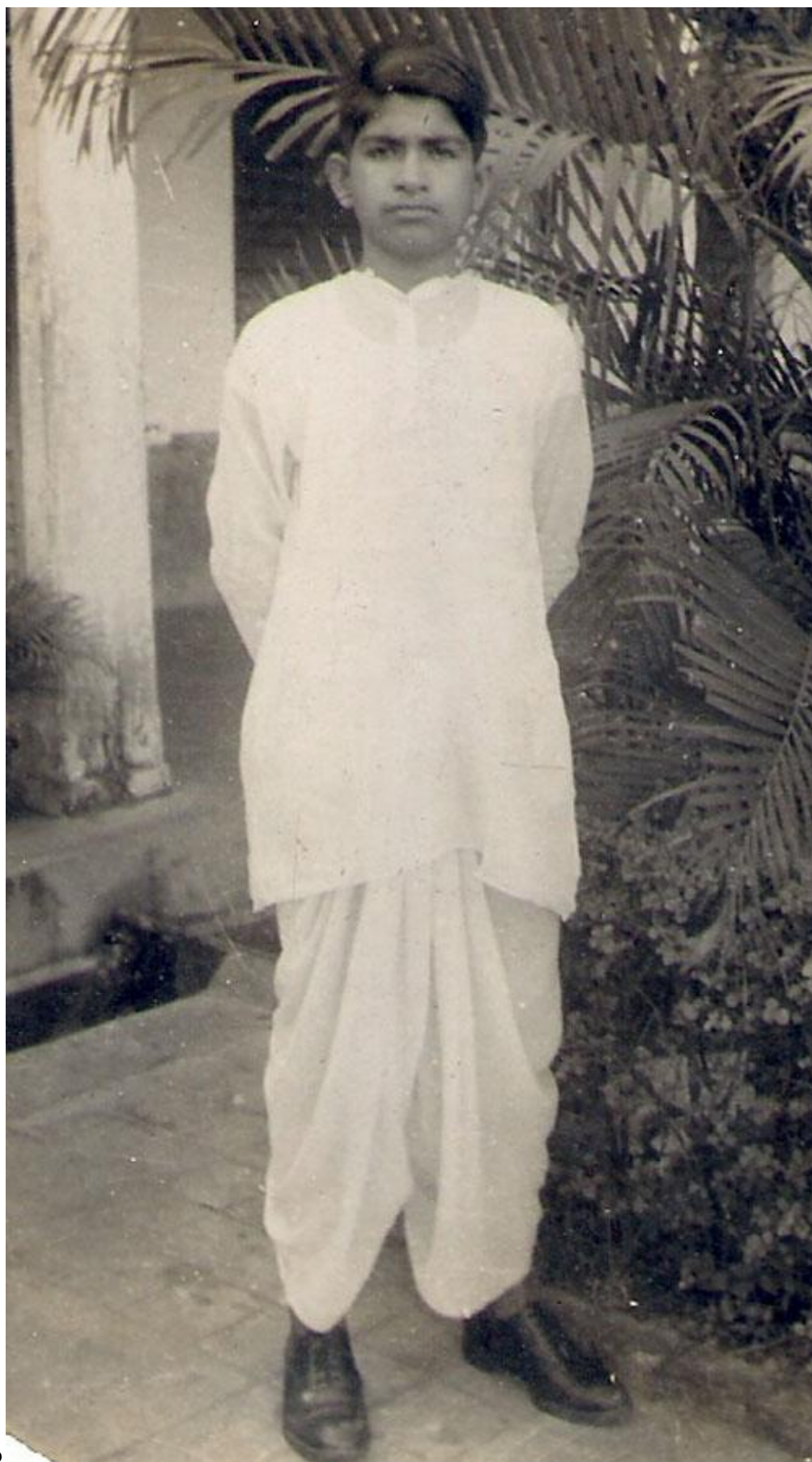
It was in 1950 that I came to Birlapur again for schooling along with Nand Kishore Chacha. My uncle was married by that time. My grandmother accompanied us. And thereafter my grandmother remained in Birlapur with us till end. We got admitted in class VI. It was the beginning of my regular schooling.

I still have the nightmarish memory of the football ground where I met with the major accident. My left ankle got fractured under a manual pulled road roller. Our headmaster had instructed the students to bring that for a show by a body builder. He was going to put that heavy roller on his chest. I still remember the nuisance that I had created for my grandparents with my pain for the first few days. I had to go to Calcutta Medical College Hospital for treatment. The ankle and the portion of my leg up to knee got plastered. For a long time I could not go to school. BK Sarbajna, our headmaster, started calling me as 'Khoda' (lame) after I joined class with plaster on.

Our headmaster had an elegant personality, pretty tall, and with impressive moustaches just like Sir Asutosh Mukherji. He always put on hand washed white dhoti and kurta. As I remember, he had authored some books in English. One of those relating to the lives of great Indians was a rapid reader in class VII. It started with a quote- 'Lives of great men always remind us, we can make our life sublime'.

I remember few more interesting incidents. I participated in recitation and acted in dramas. I was acting as Ajay in 'Mewar Patan' of D.L.Roy. My toy pistol didn't work. I made a pistol-like sound from my mouth. The whole auditorium burst into big laughter. I was of 12 years at that time. I don't if they laughed at my ingenuity or foolish action.

I remember few more interesting incidents. I participated in recitation and acted in dramas. I was acting as Ajay in 'Mewar Patan' of D.L.Roy. My toy pistol didn't work. I made a pistol-like sound from my mouth. The whole auditorium burst into big laughter. I was of 12 years at that time. I don't if they laughed at my ingenuity or foolish action.



On way to

The In

I was never good in sports but when I was in class X, I played volleyball for some time. And once my friends, who respected me for my scholarship took me in team too. They took me to play against Batanagar High School.

I remember many of the teachers: Mullick Babu was my class teacher in class VI. I topped that year itself. I continued to be at the top till the test examination conducted by the school for sent up for the board examination of class X. In class X, my class teacher Shri Tarak Nath Mandal gave so much marks in Bengali to my friend Tapobrata Sarkar that made me second. Tarak Babu was the private tutor of Tapobrata. Tarak Babu checked the answer books of the two papers of Bengali language. For my Hindi papers, Shri MBL Shrivastava, the assistant head master couldn't have done that neither he ever expected that. In the process, Tapobrata had scored above 80 in language papers. I felt very bad when Tarak Babu as class teacher announced the rank. Lakshmi Baba as well as Shri Srivastava also felt bad. But in the High School Board examination, Tapobrata scored far less than me. I could never forget the partisan act of Tarak Babu.

I was the sole student of Shri Mukut Bihari Lal Srivastava for Hindi. MBL Srivastava was a very serious person. He had written some children story books in Hindi. I had hardly ever talked with him on any other issue. But I remember his concern about my reading so many out of course Hindi books when I would have focused on the preparation for School final examination. He had expressed his concern to Lakshmi Baba. His wife used to tie *rakhi* to Lakshmi Baba. His eldest daughter Manorama was senior to me in the school. Birlapur Vidyalaya was a coeducational institute. She came along with us once to Pipra too when we visited Pipra in a Christmas holiday. Later on, Manorama went to Pilani for higher studies and married with Pandey. She came to our residence in Noida once with her daughter who works here. Manorama perhaps wanted to see Yamuna. I could see how one changes over the year.

Over the years, the experience of my school days kept me brooding about our education system. I did pretty well in examinations under very odd circumstances. Can one imagine my nightmare of the school days? My teachers taught me in mostly in the local language of West Bengal. I wrote my examinations in Hindi. I could find hardly any first class text books in Hindi in Calcutta. Unfortunately, even after having English as major subject with 250 marks in School Final Examination, I was pretty poor in communicating in English. I confess Lakshmi Baba and even Mukteswar Chacha were excellent in communicating in English. It was all due to my arrogance against English. I could hardly realize it. But the teaching and testing system in school hardly emphasized on skilling a student in English communication that was going to be the medium of instruction in higher education. I consider I have not been able to make up my vocabulary over the years and I have just managed.

And the less I talk about the quality or qualifications of the teachers, the better it will be. However, I must write about one. I and Tapobroto had opted for Advanced Mathematics as additional subject instead of general science. Shri Nand Lal Banerji had joined the school as headmaster. He took the responsibility for teaching the two of us the subject. He hardly taught anything. Perhaps he was not capable of it. How could we learn and score in the subject? How much can one learn by self study? Believe there was none in Birlapur to whom I could have gone



for tuition even if Lakshmi could afford it. I came to know at later date that he had fake degree. Interestingly, NL Banerji was pretty friendly with Lakshmi Baba, as he came from Varanasi.

I do also remember my Pandit Mosai who taught Sanskrit. I scored pretty high marks (in 70s) in Sanskrit in School Final examination of West Bengal Board. He wanted me to join in humanities for higher education instead of joining science stream.

I took tuition for some months in class X from Shri Kisor Mohan Roy Chaudhry for mathematics. I used to go to his residence. For some time, Aditi Sardar who was one year junior to me in school used to be there during tuition. I don't know if my score of 94 in School Final made him happy. One of the attractions of going to him was his little daughter who was really sweet. It was the second marriage of Kishori Babu. His first wife had died. Perhaps that was the reason than Kishori Babu appeared always gloomy. Interestingly I was shocked to know later that his second wife also died much earlier leaving her daughter.

I got interested in Hindi poetry because of two young teachers who didn't teach me: Sahodar Pandey, who could render Hindi poems particularly those of Haribans Rai 'Bachchan' in melodious voice and Dinesh Misra, who was a poet himself. Sahodar Pandey set an example of self study. He had joined our school after Intermediate but did his graduation, post graduation and completed his PhD too.

I got selected to represent the school in one outstation camp in Ghatsila of the students from various schools for a week. Kailash Nath Katju, the then governor of West Bengal had come to see us off at Howrah Railway Station. He talked to me in Hindi and asked me to do the best in career. My grandfather was also present. He felt very happy about my interactions with His Excellency Katju.

During 1952 general election, Pandit Nehru and then Jagjivan Ram addressed meetings in the ground of a jute mill in nearby Kalipur. Mahavir Prasad, the assist general manager of Birla Jutes in those days was the Congress' candidate for the parliament. I was part of the school boys who were taken there. We sat in the front row on the ground. My grandfather was also there. That was the first time I had seen Nehru. Later on my grandfather also had taken me to Kalyani Congress in 1954. I was in Class IX. I could see Nehru with Maulana Azad on the dais. The political leaders meant a lot at that time, because of the sacrifices they had made to get the independence of the country from the biggest power of the world at that time.

During school days, one of my favourite places after school hours was the jetty of the jute mills. I would sit at the extreme end of the platform and kept on seeing the river flowing and the ships moving towards Calcutta port during high tide.

A huge library was housed in a big hall in the residential complex for senior executives on the bank of River Hooghly. I was a regular visitor. I kept on reading Hindi books from the library. Very early in the school days, I requested Baba to get me the Mahabharat from the collection of one senior executive of the mill, Mr. Kejriwal. Baba used to go for tuition of Kejriwal's adopted son. Kejriwal didn't have any issue and had married a widow even at old age for it. That was the

time when I went through all the volumes of Mahabharat published in Hindi by Gita Press, Gorakhpur.



Near School Board of Honour (Batch 1957)



Board of Honour

I still vividly remember the day after my School final Examination result was out. I was sitting there alone. Suddenly I saw Mr. Ramlal Thirani, the General Manager (the topmost position then) and Mr. S. Mishra, Chief of Personnel coming towards me. Mr. Thirani embraced and congratulated me. Mr. Thirani showed the same affection when once I visited Birlapur with Yamuna in early 1970s.



At Birlapur Vidyalaya in 2009

In 2009, I revisited the factory, the school, and the residential areas. In school, I was excited to see the Board of Honours that has my name still in that.

Over the years, Birlapur, the industrial township had grown around the first Indian jute mill. It added market, bank, a new club building and a wonderful guest house. But it's dying fast. It reminded me of a similar or worse condition of another Birla township, called Hind Motor. Unfortunately, I spent many good years of my life in both the places.

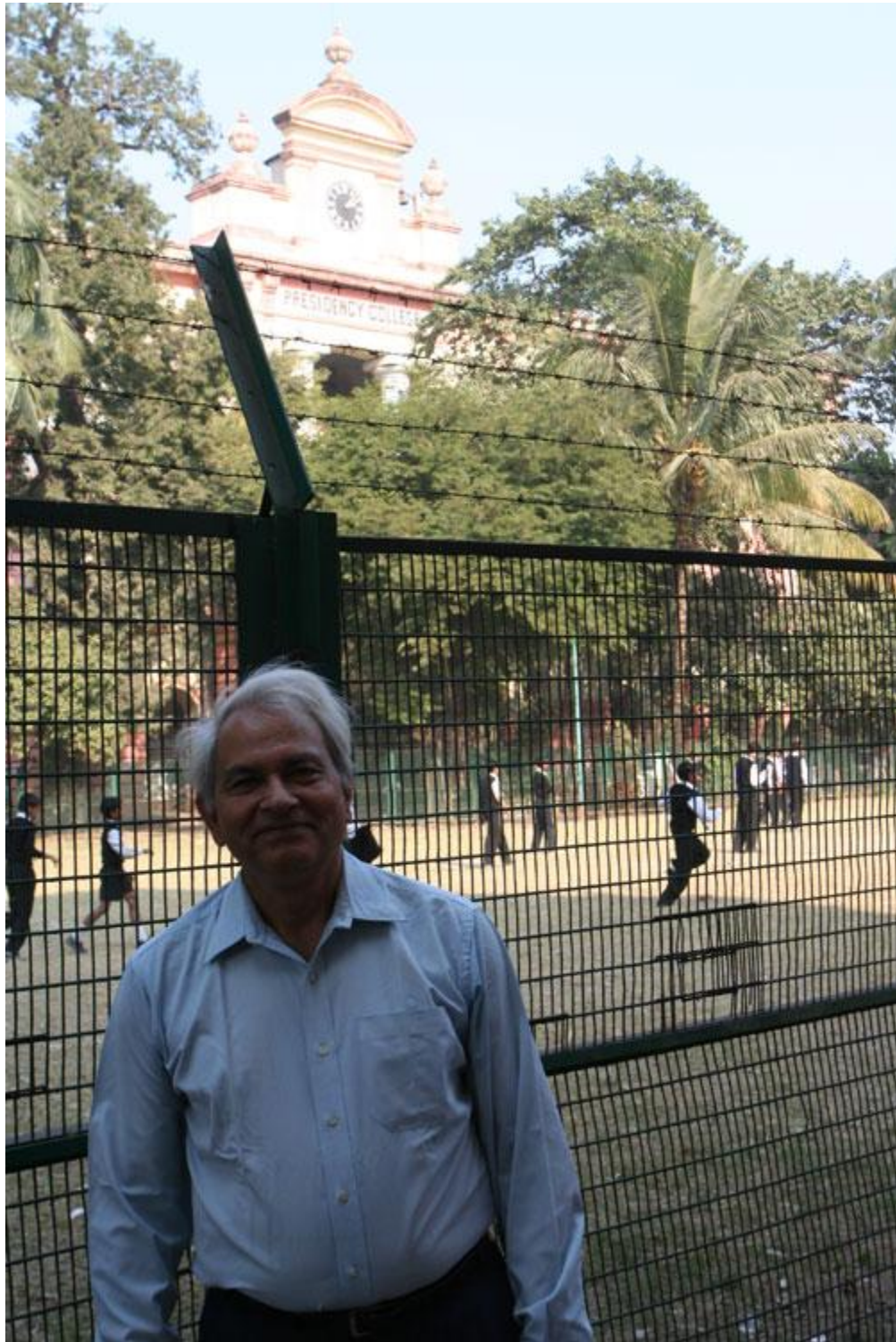
## **Presidency College** gave me honour

I was enjoying hard-earned holidays in my village after appearing for my school final examination. Jamuna Baba had given words to Rama Rai and Ramjee Rai of Bodarhi. They had helped my mother and me in getting the landed property of my maternal grandfather Hari Rai against the resistance of almost all in that village. Ramjee Rai had his only daughter Sona married to Ram Vishal, Yamuna's brother. All my protests and resistance didn't work. Finally

Lakshmi Baba also yielded. And I got married on June 14, 1955 in village Madhukarpur. By the time I returned with my grandfather to Birlapur, the result of School Final was out.

The diaries of my grandfather of 1955-57 provide some interesting information besides reflecting his intense attachment for me. It was on June 28, 1955, when we reached Presidency College after getting harassed from Scottish Church. I instantly got admission based on the marks obtained in school final examination. On July 11, 1955, I got into Eden Hindu Hostel after paying only Rs 69 as initial charges.



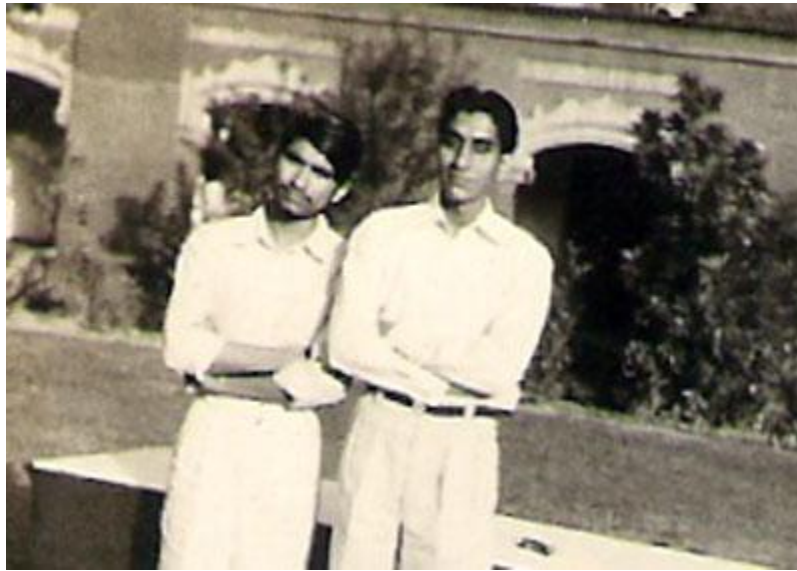


Outside the ground of Presidency College



Photo on Identity Card

I had a group of five friends who moved together in hostel. Rampall Joshi actually was studying Intermediate Arts in Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad College. Samir was in Presidency but in Arts stream. In 1993, I met Rampall once when he came to meet me in Maurya Sheraton, Delhi. We spent the whole day meeting alumni of Presidency College of our time in Delhi including Dr. Kamal Dutta. Ashok Sengupta came in the reception function of Rakesh-Alapana marriage. Samir is no more. It was Rampall who told me his story.



Me at left and Ram Pall Joshi, 1956

I spent two years 1955-57 in Hindu Hostel while doing my Intermediate Science in Presidency College. I can scrape through many sweet memories of those days. I met here with many celebrities of the country including Dr Rajendra Prasad, the first president of India. Dr. Prasad also had lived in Hindu Hostel when he was in Presidency College. He came to attend a college function and visited Eden Hindu Hostel. I vividly remember his simplicity. One of his grandsons accompanied him. There was hardly any security cover but for his sole bodyguard who never tried to be very near unlike the politicians of today. My grandfather also happened to be with me. I remember my conversation with Dr. Prasad. I had said, "Bengal unlike Bihar has at least no problem about caste." And Dr. Prasad replied, "It was not so in his days in the hostel." He said pointing to a corner, "There used to be row of kitchens one for each caste."





Ram Pall (L-Behind), From L, me with Samir (second) and Ashok (Fourth) at Eden Hindu Hostel



Ashok Sen Gupta in Reception with his wife, 1993

And just few days before Dr. Prasad's visit, another very old gentle man from Bihar who was contemporary of Dr. Prasad had come visiting Hindu Hostel. He was quite jovial and talked how he didn't know how to use a toilet pan. The famous historian of Mogul period, Sir Yadunath



Sarkar also came to the hostel in one function near around Sarswati Puja that year that used to be celebrated with a lot fanfare.

In my class of 1955-57, there were some 5-7 Hindi speaking students. In my section of students with biology as fourth subject, there was one Shukla. In the section with other subjects such as geology as fourth subjects the Hindi speaking lot consisted of Marwaris with titles of Taparia and Garodia. I couldn't develop any friendship with them as they were all day scholars. I remember one who was famous for putting on a different pair of shoes every day. Some of them might have become multi-millionaires.

Prof Amiya Mazumdar, a renowned philosopher was the warden during our time. I didn't like the food of the canteen at all. I was strictly vegetarian and the cooks used to put small fish in even vegetable and dal. The smelling heavy utensils kept me half-fed every day. Once in a week I used to go to an eating-house on Harrison Road (present MG Road) for some 'puri-subji' paying a quarter of a rupee. However, I used to like the food once in a while when it used to be a 'feast' (what the ward boys used to call it) in canteen. Those were the difficult days. I was to spend very miserly. My grandfather used to visit me in the hostel quite often. However, I couldn't have offered food for him from the canteen. I was not sure of its cleanliness and vegetarian purity.

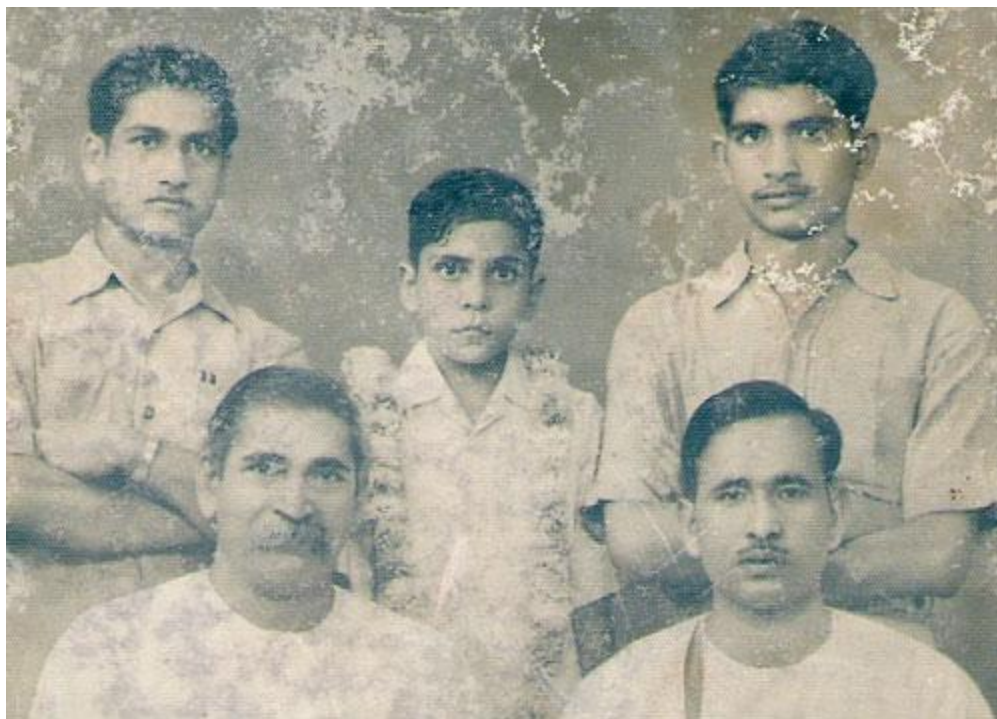
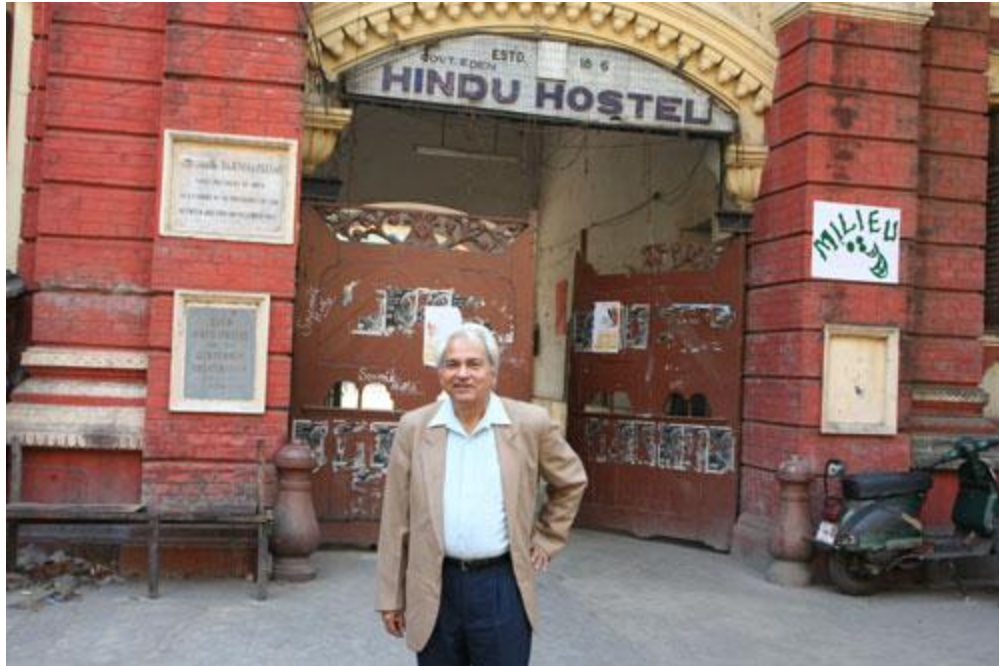


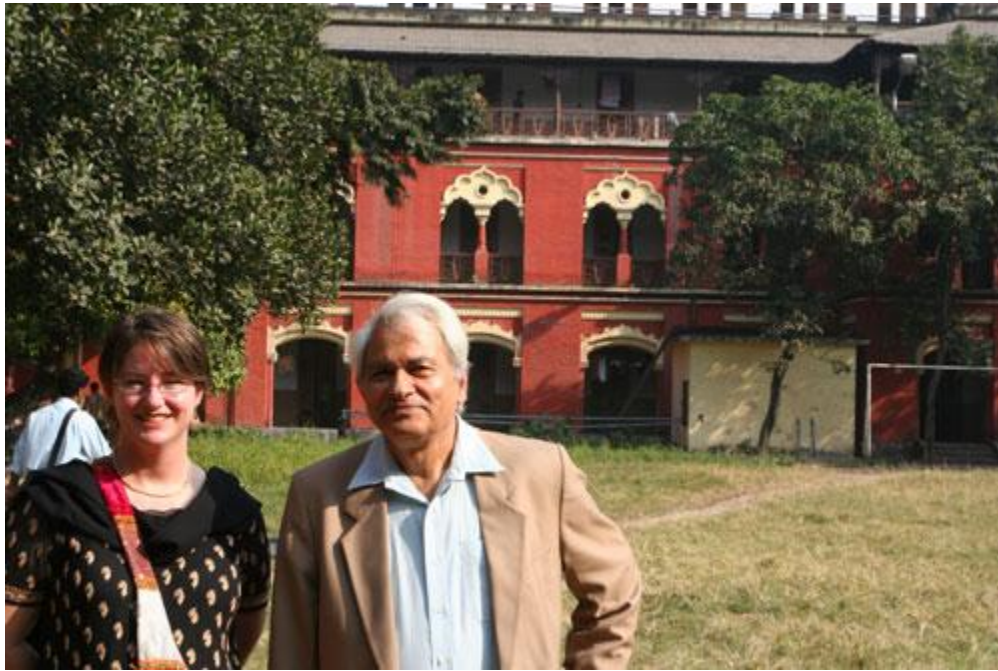
Photo of College days with Lakshmi Baba, Chandramani Mama and Nand Kishore Chacha

I vividly remember a day when my final examination of I Sc was on. I had returned to hostel from the centre at Sanskrit College after finishing the first paper of Chemistry. I had not fared well. At least I had assumed so. I wanted to drop out. My grandfather was there waiting for me. He solaced me. And after taking some sweet that he had brought, I went back for my second paper in Chemistry. I did pretty well.

My grandfather wanted me to get into IIT, Kharagpur or Indian school of Mines, Dhanbad. He had arranged for the admission forms and had submitted them too. I prepared and appeared for the IIT test from Hindu Hostel though it was closed. For IIT entrance, I had to go to Bengal Engineering College, Sibpur, and for Indian School of Mines, Chanbad to Scottish Church College.



At the gate of Hindu Hostel



With Shannon on courtyard of Hindu Hostel



Hindu Hostel, the ward where I spent 2 years





My ward 5 on top floor in Hindu Hostel





In front of Presidency College

In January 2008, I visited Eden Hindu Hostel and Presidency College with Shannon and Anand after many years. Shannon was enjoying my moving around in the ward of the hostel where I spent two years. Some boarders near the gate requested me to take a photograph with them and we complied.



With the residents of Hindu Hostel 2008

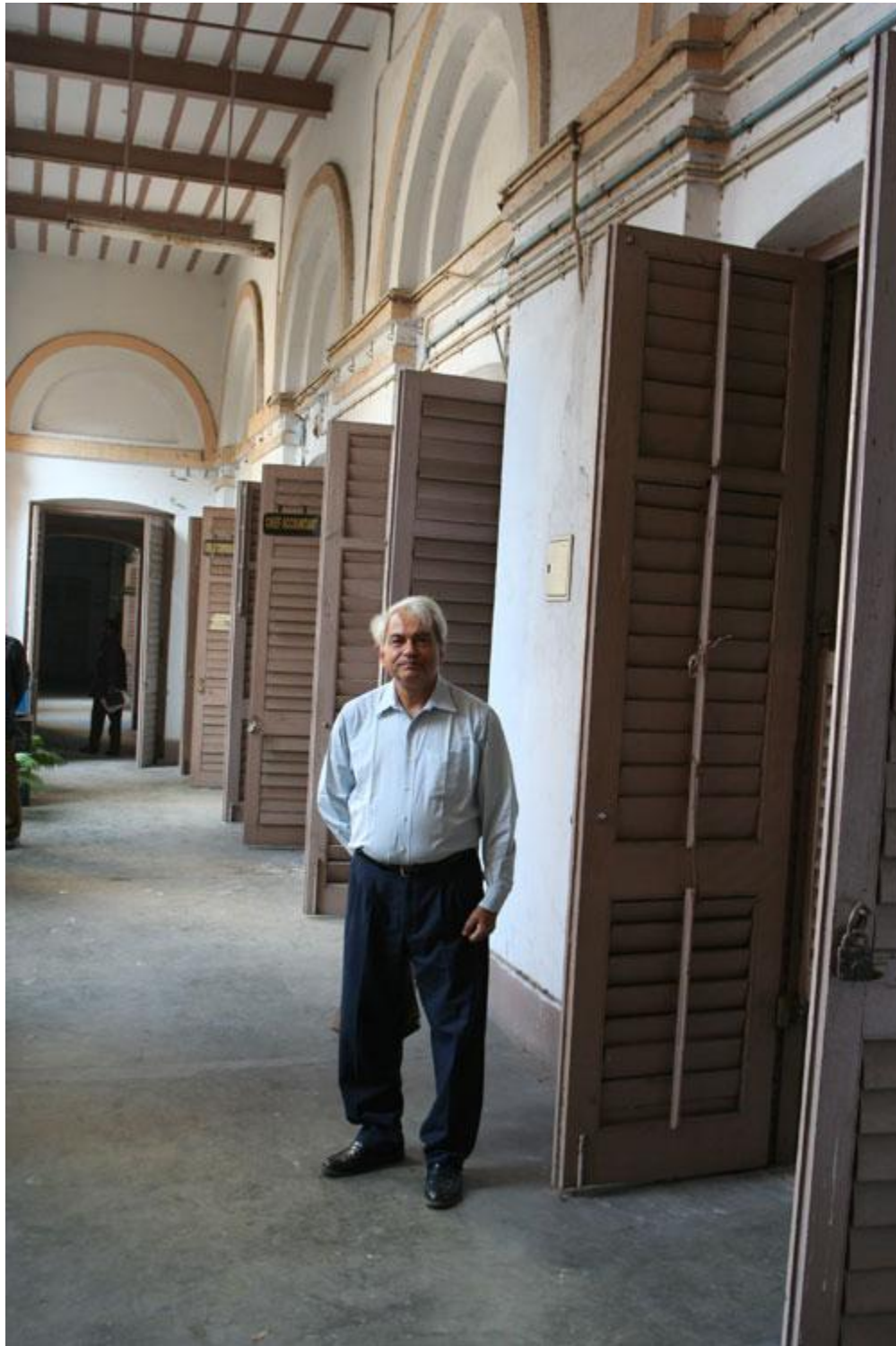
While going up the stairs to the first floor of the Presidency College, I always get a nostalgic feeling. It reminds me of the incident associated with Netaji Subhash Bose and his slapping of an English arrogant professor. However, many doubt if that is true.



Shannon and me on Historic staircase of Presidency College

When I walked through the corridor I got reminded of many professors including Prof. Tara Pada Mukheji (professor of English, teaching Shakespeare's Julius Ceaser), Taraknath Agrawal (Hindi), PK Dutta and Prof Rakhit (Chemistry) who left lasting impressions on me and I feel proud of being one from this great institute. Shivtosh Mukhopadhyaya, the grandson of Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhaya was my professor of zoology, as I had opted for biology as fourth subject to keep the option of joining medical colleges open. He had an impressive personality and nationalist. I remember the day when some Indians were killed in Goa that was under Portugal at that time. Prof Mukhopadhaya came to the class but he had tears in his eyes and asked the students to leave for the day. Let me confess I never enjoyed the practical works of the dissections of toad or guinea pig or crockroaches, but I carried on and scored good marks too.

I do remember one more occasion that was when the dead body of Dr. Meghnad Saha was brought in the premises of Presidency College and every one had paid homage to it. I never knew in those days how big he was in the field of science. Unfortunately Dr. Saha had joined politics and become MP too.



In the corridor of Presidency College, First Floor

Presidency College could have become a university in itself or an institute of national importance but for the leftists' government in West Bengal. And I hate leftists for neglecting



this great institute. I wish the institute such as Presidency College would have been converted as national institutes by constitutions open for students from all parts of India based on merit.



Photo on College Street

The Presidency College has given West Bengal most of its great sons and daughters. For many like me, it remains a temple. I used to get excited with the respect that I got when any Bengali came to know that I have studied at Presidency College, Calcutta. And the bookshops of College Street around Presidency College were eternal source for knowledge of all subjects. My love of books came from this place.

### **Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur made me what I am**

After appearing for the entrance examinations for IIT and School of Mines, Dhanbad, I went to Pipra to spend some time with my family, more so with great grand mothers who were alive. The IIT letter inviting me for interview before the admission came to Birlapur, but then got redirected to Pipra. Before we could receive the letter, we had returned to Birlapur. By the time the letter was in our hand, my date of interview was over. However, we dashed to Kharagpur, could appear for interview, and got admitted in mechanical engineering. I remember the interview and how I made the interviewer ask the question about the industrial activities at Birlapur with which I was familiar. I got Azad Hall for residence. As usual, my grandfather had accompanied and helped me.



L-Main Building as in 1960, R- Prof Seyfarth and the family



Old building that was Hijli prison



Reading Hall of Main library IIT, Kharagpur in 1960

While we were staying in RP Hall of Residence on the night before the interview, I met Braj Bhushan Pandey. He had also come with his father, who was a teacher again. He was from Arrah in Bihar, my district. Braj Bhushan had done his schooling in Patna. We became close friend and are still in contact.

Pandey once visited Birlapur with me. My grandmother asked him if he was married. Naturally, he negated it. However, the heaven fell on me when she told him that I was married. I was really embarrassed, as none in IIT knew about it. I requested Pandey not to reveal that. He agreed and kept the promise.

Braj Bhushan after a short spell in Patna Engineering College came to IIT, Kharagpur and is still a professor there. My eldest son Rakesh and Pandey's Manish were also batch mates and graduated from IIT, Kharagpur. Both are settled in USA.

I remained for the first year in Azad hall and then shifted to Rajendra Prasad Hall. It was nearer to the main building and library. Perhaps, there was one more reason. Prof R Misra, whom I knew and had met along with my grandfather at the time of admission, was the warden of the hall. He was one of the few who had joined academic career after working in industry. I almost adored Prof. Misra. He had relinquished the post of the head of the department in favour of Prof Belgaoankar as the later had been his teacher in BHU. There was one other reason too. Shri AK Banerji was my senior from Birlapur Vidyalaya. He had sent the application form of IIT admission to my grandfather and helped me to escape the ragging in the first year. He was in RP Hall.

Each student in those days got a single room with steel furniture such as a study table, a chair, a collapsible cot with racks built in the wall for keeping the belongings. The institute didn't provide electric fan. There were toilet complex with bath rooms, but water supply was extremely unpredictable. Many times the water used to suddenly go away while we were in toilet or bathing with soap on the body creating a real awkward situation.

I had friendship with two groups in the hall. The first group was of those residing near my room and the second one of those in mechanical engineering department. In the final year, GL Makhija became one of the closest friends. He was in the machine design group of specialization. Makhija was from Calcutta and had done his I.Sc. from St. Xavier's. It was Makhija who had the camera and had photographed me when we were finishing the final semester. Later on, Makhija once visited us in Hind Motor too with family when he was working for Britannia.





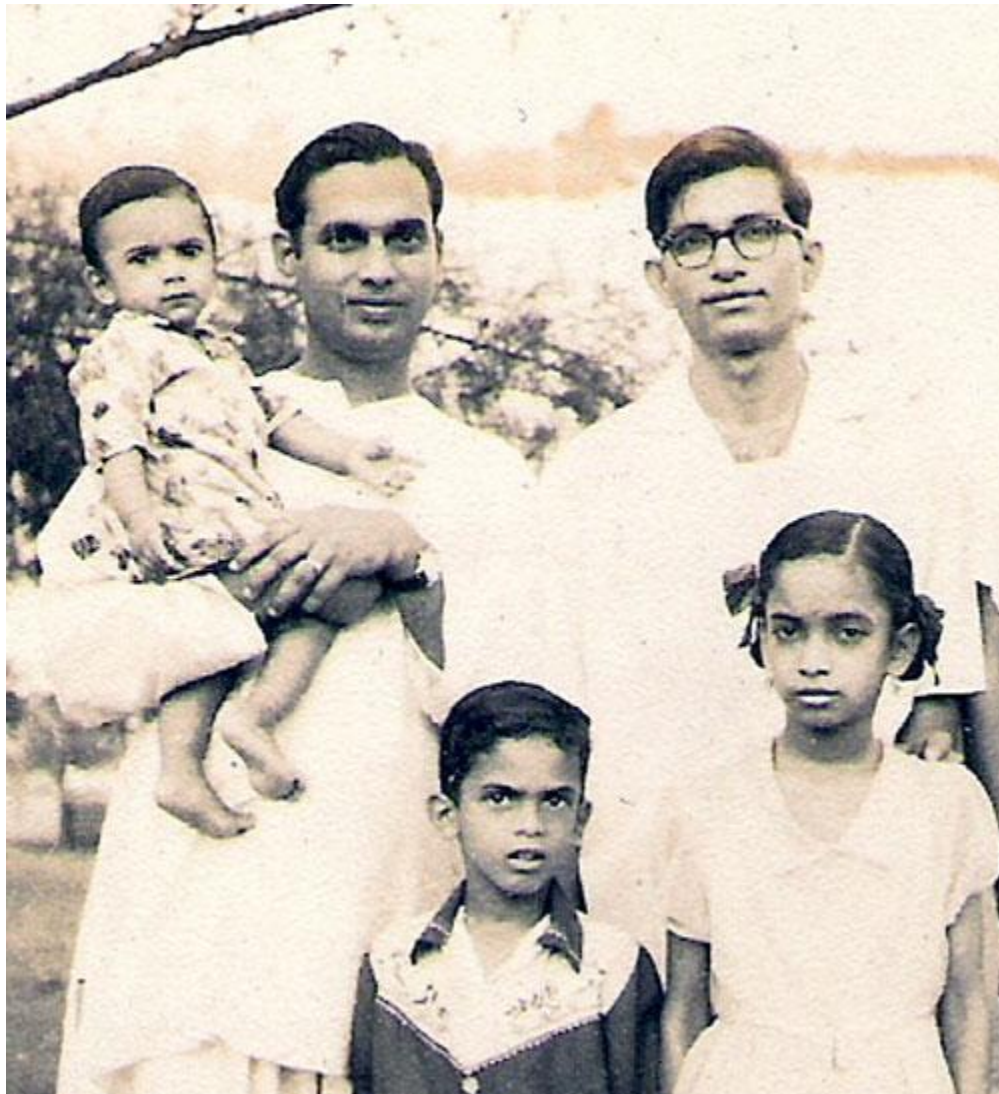
Batch mates of Mechanical Egg in RP Hall of Residence  
(From L, Me, Mukherji, GL Makhija (third), Gokhale and Mukherji)



On the steps of newly constructed Foundry Workshop

The first group had Padum Lal Shrestha from Nepal studying mining, MC Dwivedi of Chemical engineering, and Garg of Civil. We lived on the same floor of RP hall and pretty close, but never met after IIT days. MC Dwivedi was a great Yoga expert.





With Prof. Jaswant Singh's Family, 1960

Prof. Jaswant Singh came and lived with us in Hind Motor. He also came with his wife again when they were leaving for Nigeria. Mrs. Singh fasted for Jiutiya together with Yamuna. Prof Singh visited us once again with his youngest daughter. She was appearing for some examination. His sons are also now in USA.





Jaswant Singh and Munmun with Yamuna in HM

I was a pampered child of my family. Food remained my problem. I never liked the food even in IIT. I was strictly vegetarian. All the cooks were from Telengana region and the menu contained mainly south Indian items. I got introduced for the first time with Sambhar, Rasam, Upama and Idli. I used to pick up pieces of lady fingers from sambhar as vegetables. Interestingly over the years now, all those dishes have become my favourite.

I remember few things from the first year of the ragging and my ignorance about many things. I can never forget Prof Gokhale who taught Physics and the examination paper he set for the first semester. It was an open book examination. Many of my friends had carried bagful of books. When Prof Gokhale came after the examination, the class complained about the paper being tough. He laughed and then said, 'It was meant for only 20 minutes'. On the board, he started writing in all details what he expected with all steps. He was well within the time.

I don't know about others but let me confess that I hardly understood much what was taught in IIT in four years. I remained an average student. I lost my merit cum means stipend too based on the poor performance in the examination of the first year. Hardly any teacher made any lasting impression on me. The subjects and the courses didn't interest me. I still think the curricula could have been made better, interesting, and useful with industry-bias. Unfortunately, none of the teachers followed any text book. Each one taught some topics in piecemeal with no continuity. The students could succeed as it was all internal examinations by the same teachers who used to take our classes.

It was only in the fourth year that I started liking the courses. Some American professors had joined IIT, Kharagpur. Prof. Seyfarth was my professor, as I had got the specialization option of machine design because of my scores. Production engineering used to be the most sought after option of specialization for the students in mechanical engineering in those days. Interestingly I had to deal with and look after production engineering aspect of the manufacturing sector during most of my professional career. I still remember Prof Belgaonkar announcing my name as the first in the first semester of the final year. It happened because of American system of setting the question papers and perhaps some luck.

As a requirement of the course, I selected to write my thesis paper on 'Offset Right Angle Gear System'. Today I don't consider the work done by me as anything great. But I could learn the gear technology to some extent and its application. Unfortunately Prof Seyfarth was not of much help in making the work of any significant value. I published a gist of the work done but that could certainly have taken a form of a good book for the industry. While clearing the junks before moving out of Salt Lake I threw that thesis document also out.

I was for about two years in National Cadet Core while in IIT. Shri BBPandey was with me. We attended a camp also in 1958 in Meerut cantonment. It was a nice experience. I had met a very senior army officer during a feast (Burra Khana) who talked all the time in Bhojpuri. While returning, I with Pandey visited the places of interest such as Kutub Minar and Redfort in Delhi and had a stopover in Varanasi too and visited the Viswanath temple and Sarnath. Sarnath was a wide open place in those days with no encroachment. Interestingly, I learnt the synchronizing of the left and right legs with opposite hands for the parade in a real hard way. It was really a difficult task for me. Mr. KM Agrawal was also in NCC as a senior officer in those days. Later he worked with me in Hindustan Motors.

I liked the two industrial tours organized by the department. In the first, we covered some major manufacturing industrial units of the East India that included TISCO (present Tata Steel), Tata Tube, IISCO in Asansol and Kulti, Burn in Howrah, Texmaxo and Mint in Calcutta. It gave a glimpse of what Indian industry was engaged in those days. In the second tour, the students of the mechanical department visited South India, mainly Bangalore and Madras ending with Godrej in Bombay. Off the factory, I still remember the beauty of Brindaban Garden of Mysore and Palace of Tipu Sultan in Srirangpatanam and Lal Bagh Garden in Bangalore.



In Lal Bagh Garden in Bangalore

The summer training assignment was the best part of the IIT education system. While in second year, I spent time in Birla Jute repair shop. I tried my hands on some machines. In third year, a group of four students of our batch got the chance of seeing the activities of TELCO, one of the best manufacturing companies with the latest machining facilities of latest technology of that time. But our stay in Jamshedpur was really tough in hot summer. We were staying in Utkal Niwas in Bistupur area. TELCO in those days were producing commercial vehicles in collaboration with Mercedes Benz. It also manufactured steam locomotives. Interestingly, the company had permitted us the training only in the locomotive division. Only one of our junior in IIT, Kharagpur had got trained in auto division that he managed because his father was in good

position in Tatas. The commuting to the TELCO (present Tata Motors) plant in Jamshedpur from Utakal Bhawan every day on bicycles that we had brought from college was tough. Finally, we decided to use the shared taxis that used to ply. It charged only a quarter of a rupee per person. But that was a lot for that time.

It was during the same period that Yamuna, my wife was to be brought to Pipra from her village as per the practice of 'dwiragman', or 'gawana' in Bhojpuri. Jamuna Baba had requested Lakshmi Baba to send me to Pipra for that. Lakshmi Baba visited Kharagpur to take me to Pipra. He visited Jamshedpur too, but couldn't locate me. I had not communicated him about the absence from the IIT campus and training programme. He was really pained. I knew the story only through his diary.

Many dignitaries of India visited IIT during the period of my stay. Dr. Satyen Bose was one. Dr. BC Roy was the Chairman of the governing body and attended all the convocations. One of the convocations during time was addressed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India. I remember vividly the convocation that was addressed by CD Deshmukh, the then finance minister. He had addressed the residents of RP Hall, where he attended a lunch on request from Prof. Misra.

In third year once TR Gupta, the legendary chief of Jay Engineering that manufactured Usha fans and sewing machines visited and addressed the students of Mechanical Engineering Department. Later on, I came to know more about him. But during his life time, his way of labour-friendly management practice failed. Someone got Ph. D on the case study of the management practices initiated by Mr. Gupta. As a boss, Mr. Gupta would never listen to the suggestions from the officers, but agree to the same if it would be demanded by workers and their representatives demoralizing the officers. Later on Gupta was given to run HEC, Ranchi. But he hardly succeeded.

On March 10, 1962, I was in Kharagpur to be present for the Seventh Convocation when I received my Graduate - B.Tech (Hons.)- Degree. Convocation in those days used to be the most important day in the campus. Zakir Hussain addressed the convocation function, and as usual as the Chairman of the governing body, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the chief Minister of West Bengal was also present. I have tried to keep in mind the Pledge. It had Sanskrit version also printed on it and all the graduates took the pledge:

*"We, the graduates of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur hereby pledge-*

*That we shall always endeavour to be scrupulously honest in the discharge of our duties as engineers and scientists;*

*That we shall always endeavour to utilize our knowledge of science and technology for the service of our country and the glory of our institute;*

*That in all circumstances, we shall try to uphold the dignity of the individual and the integrity of the profession."*





Photograph after convocation, 1962

In 1966, after Yamuna had joined me, we had gone to Digha for a holiday with Sandip Bhai and AK Jaggi. We visited IIT, Kharagpur while returning.

In 1985, Rakesh could enter IIT and decided for Kharagpur. I accompanied him with Yamuna and stayed in Viseshwarya Guest house. Yamuna



Yamuna in Vusheswaraya Guest House in 1985

I became a frequent visitor to Kharagpur for some time again. I came in contact with some professors in Mechanical Engineering Department and did deliver some talk also. One year, on the request of the department I assessed the project works of its M. Tech students of manufacturing engineering too. I kept on convincing the faculty to be more industry-oriented. But unfortunately, none of them showed any interest. However, I invited once Prof AB Chattopadhyaya to Hindustan Motors when he conducted a daylong seminar on machining technology.

In one of the alumni function that I attended in Calcutta when I was working in Hindustan Motors, I met Prof. SR Sen Gupta who was the director of IIT, Kharagpur at our time. It became a memorable meeting. I could never believe that he was the same person whom I used to be scared of as student.



At an alumni meet in Calcutta with Dr.SR Sen Gupta, director IIT, KGP in our days

After Rakesh days, Prof BB Pandey and AB Chattopadhyaya remained my contact. I have kept on writing my views about IIT in my blog.

## Professional Career

### Years in Hindustan Motors

After completing the final project and submitting it to Prof. Seyfarth, I left Kharagpur and came back to Birlapur. Before getting an employment in Hindustan Motors Ltd, I had tried to get some job with other manufacturing companies. One was, as I remember, New Allenbury, a gear manufacturing company. One Mr. Baheti interviewed me, but let me confess I could not get selected and employed. I came to realize that even the working for the thesis ‘Right-Angled Gear Systems’ at IIT had not made me sufficiently knowledgeable about the basics of gear design.

Some of his acquaintances from among the officers in Birlapur advised my grandfather to get me a job in Hindustan Motors, one of the top companies of the time. It was in the line of my qualification of mechanical engineering too. My grandfather managed to get a recommendation letter from Shri Ram Lal Thirani, General Manager of Birla Jute Mills for Mr. Dhiren Mukherji who was the factory manager of Hindustan Motors.

It was on August 1, 1961 that I went for an interview to Hind Motor. Mr. RK Vakil, the training manager and DN Mukherji, the factory manager, interviewed me. I received a letter dated August 6, 1961 confirming my selection. It expected me to sign an 7 (seven) years agreement before joining. I got into Hindustan Motors as ‘Trainee Officer’ from September 1, 1961. I signed the agreement with the company. Nand Kishore Chacha became my guarantor of the contract. It

was a totally one-sided contract. Some of my friends of IIT were already there in Hindustan Motors under the same scheme. I was to be on training for two years before the company was to assign me in some department based on vacancy.



Main Entrance Hindustan Motors, Uttarpara Plant

As executive trainee, I started with Rs. 400 as monthly remuneration, worth about \$8 today. In 2011, when I am writing this memoir we pay a salary of Rs 2,500 per month to our domestic helper Harendra besides all his expenditures including food that may be amounting to Rs 5000 or more. I don't remember what we paid to Mohan and Dayaram who served us then. However, the salary was good enough to lead a good life. All the commodities were very cheap. And interestingly, that salary was the best or one of the best in industry for a fresh engineering graduate in 1961. Even Tata Motors (TELCO, Jamshedpur at that time) were offering Rs 250 per month for graduate engineers. As per the agreement, the annual increment was Rs 50 per month for the first two years of training to be followed by a scale of Rs 75-100-100-125. After six years of working I was ensured of a salary of Rs900 per month. Doesn't it seem amazing today?

As executive trainee, I kept on moving from one department to other and covered major departments such as machine shop, press shop, forging, foundry and car assembly. It was all observational training. Somehow machine shop interested me the most. And I focused to learn operating few machine tools myself and understanding its production engineering and maintenance aspects. That gave a lot of confidence. Early 1962, I was in the team that carried out the annual inventory of cutting tools and tooling items used in automobile manufacturing in tool stores that was under tool control department of production engineering-mechanical. Unlike others, I worked hard and seriously. I gathered a lot of technical knowledge that helped me a lot later on.

After a year, I was in tool tryout department. PT Mathews and BP Jain, the seniors from IIT were heading the department. The department tried out every new machine-tool and the toolings for a machining operation that it was meant to carry out.

During the training period in tryout, my first paper 'Offset right-angled gear system' based on my project in the final year of IIT got published in 'Engineering News of India' and I got a small remuneration of Rs 30 for the same too. I was excited. I loved the job in tryout, as it was



providing me knowledge and skill in machining technology. I had selected a fresh young technician to work with me. I could work on new machine tools and its operation myself. While trying out a copy turning operation on the end of axle tubes, I discovered certain phenomena because of the change in the height of cutting point of tools. It affected the sizes of various steps on the components machined. I came out with a formula. I wrote an article on the findings in an article and got it published again. And as a hobby I kept on writing technical articles.

Those were the best days of Hindustan Motors (HM). Besides its earlier tie-up with Morris Motors for Ambassador cars, it had entered into collaboration with Vauxhall Motors of UK for manufacturing Bedford Trucks. HM was investing on capital goods in a big way for indigenizing the manufacturing of the truck components. However, the production of Ambassadors was the main activity.

Production shops in those days of HM were in one huge shed with facilities for machining almost all the major components of suspensions, axles, transmission and engine and its assemblies and testing that went in making of Ambassador Cars. Car assembly facility including painting and stamping facilities were in attached sheds on the right side as we entered the factory premises. Hindustan Motors was known for its Ambassador cars everywhere in India. It then produced 10-15 cars a day.

Mr. S.L. Bhatte was the general manager of Hindustan Motors, Mr. DN Mukherji, the factory manager, and Mr. BM Pant, a relation of India's home minister Gobind Ballav Pant with expertise in paint technology became works manager. Mr. GC Bansal and KT Rajan of the 1955 and 1956 batches of IIT, Kharagpur respectively were looking after the production engineering. Pretty soon Mr. Bansal got promoted as technical manager and KT Rajan started looking after technical side of sheet metal division as asst. technical manager. Mr. PV Krishnaih of Mr. Bansal batch from IIT, Kharagpur headed industrial engineering and Mr. BK Chaudhry was the official head of Quality control.

Machining facilities for the components of Bedford trucks that later changed its name to 'Hindustan', were gradually getting added. I was trying out the machine tools for the machining of Rear Axle Tubes. In some months, the tryout of all the machining operations of truck rear axle components got finished. The tryout department handed over the machine tools to the production group of machine shop for regular manufacture.

Mr. Shiv Prasad, a very experienced engineer from Gaya was the head of the machine shop and Mr. BM Sharda was his assistant when I joined machine shop. They had observed me working hard in try out and had asked the training manager to place me in machine shop to take care of the supervision of the newly created truck rear axle section. However, I had a preference for the work of tool try out department and was not willing to go in production department. I tried to continue with the tool try out. I approached everyone up in the organization including the general manager Mr. SL Bhatte who was the first engineer chief of HM to press my case. Mr. Bhatte prevailed over me. He convinced of a better prospect in production shop. It was my first interaction with Mr. Bhatte. He had a charming personality. I couldn't go against his advice. I joined machine shop as supervisor of truck rear axle machining section in early 1963. My love affairs with machining as technology started.

It was a beginning of the supervisory management too for me. Besides the technical knowledge and skill, the job demanded the skill to handle people working for me. Workers on shop floor were mostly from eastern India. Some were also from South. My knowledge of Bengali became helpful. Hindustan Motors had strong unions. While one was affiliated to Communists, the second was of Indian National Congress Party. Most of the union representatives were trouble makers with no interest in discipline of the workplace and productivity. I still remember few things from those days.

Very soon I had to negotiate an incentive system for the operators in the new machining lines that I supervised. I worked with industrial engineering who had conducted work study in details. As the production of truck components varied from month to month depending on demand, it was decided to give a group incentive for the machining lines instead of the performance of individuals. Out of my academic interest, I acquired a number of books and studied about the finer aspects of industrial engineering. One day Mr. PV Krishnaih had told me a strange reason why he liked me. It was because I resembled one of his maternal uncles. Till then I had thought that was for my in-depth knowledge of industrial engineering and the technical aspects of work being undertaken in my section. Krishnaih had narrated another interesting story about one Batra, who was of his batch in IIT. Krishnaih was close to and visited Batra, who was working for a reputed British engineering company in Calcutta. Every time he found the collection of books at Batra's place increasing and Batra would be talking about them. One day Krishnaih found all books gone and the library room empty. Naturally that was a very surprising. On enquiry, Batra told him that till the time he was crazy about collecting books and spending time on it, he didn't do well at work. After he had put them all in steel trunks in his garage, he found that he was doing very well at work and getting unexpected promotions and raises.

The new department or the 'section' as it was called got gradually manned by the operators spared by the supervisors of other sections. All were to be trained for the new machines. Some of them were rogues too. As the production requirement was erratic, the incentive scheme didn't induce them to work hard. I had to be tough. The work environment was difficult for me, particularly in sultry summer with very low roof of machine shop. There was not even a desk to sit and do some writing work. I remember one day Mr. Shiv Prasad informed me about an operator complaining against me. I had asked him to fetch a glass of water even though he was a Brahmin. Mr. Prasad advised me to be a little smart in working with such elements. Perhaps he wanted me to take some workmen on my side, I don't know why but I had said, "Sir, but this was not taught in the college." Prasad was a serious person as otherwise but he smiled. Mr. Shiv Prasad was hard working and used to spend a lot of time on shop floor. He was very knowledgeable too. One day I suggested to cut down an intermediary step in a machining operation to increase production. His cool reply was, "Mr. Sharma, you must also weigh the cost of your action," He was suspecting a deterioration of quality if my suggestion got implemented. I remember still one more incident, I was standing alone. He was passing from that side. He asked me if everything was right. I said, "With everything in the new section set, I didn't have much work." Next day, I got the car axle component machining section under me. Unfortunately, he had to leave soon because of company politics.

My approach with the workmen was different. I talked with them about the need of quality aspects of their assignment, the cost of poor quality, the need of housekeeping and discipline, the elements of the cycle time of an operation, and various aspects of productivity. Interestingly most of them responded positively. I tried to be helpful and fair with them. Instead of using my discretionary authority in deciding their appraisals, increments and promotions, I went to set some clear criteria and brought in independent persons in the process for the decision. Initially I tried to get myself involved in carrying out every process improvements in the machines and equipment. With the span of control increasing fast, I started selecting the real skilled and willing persons among the workmen to carry out the tryout of my ideas related to productivity. Unfortunately, the union representatives were not at all rational in bringing about any change for better productivity. Even many new machine tools bought at huge cost for more production and better quality, had remained idle for years because of the resistance to switch over from the old way of doing an operation to new one. It required a lot of endeavour to get changes going.

I kept my academic side active and alive. Unlike others, I kept on studying the contemporary literature related to my assignment, machining and the supervisory management. When I faced any technical trouble in any machining operation on a machine tool, I went through its technical catalogues, tried to understand the root cause and ultimately found the solution. Gradually I became totally involved and dedicated to my work in the factory. I started spending very long hours in factory. I don't remember if I ever thought about my personal life and conveniences in those days. Some of my friends appreciated my hard working, but some even used to joke and considered me a fool.

Many might be surprised that even as a shop supervisor I kept on writing letters to many reputed manufacturing companies of USA taking addresses from the name plates on the machines requesting technical literatures of their products. And the Americans were excellent in complying with my requests. I even received many books, printed articles and research papers on from many companies through postal mails. I continued doing that as that was the best way to keep oneself updated. Later on after I became manager, I made HM subscribe for magazines such as *American Machinists* and *Manufacturing Engineering* for me.

In 1963 itself, Mr. Shiv Prasad gave recognition to my hard work by giving an increment of Rs 100 per month, though my due was only Rs 50 as per the agreement that I had signed. When the section with production facilities of car rear axle components came under me, I got some very good colleagues to work for me. One of them was Shri Rajratnam, an old-timer but very helpful. SK Mehta, my senior of IIT, Kharagpur came after a short stint in National Engineering Industries Jaipur and joined under me at that time. He became very close to me soon. Mehta looked after me as younger brother till he remained in Hindustan Motors before immigrating to UK. I went closer to his family too. His parents were living in Burrabazar of Calcutta. His mother was very caring. His father who worked in a bank also took care of me. It was he who got me the woolen suit piece and got it stitched for me when I was going to UK. Later on they got a company accommodation and Manju Bhabhi, the wife of Sandip Bhai also started living with him in the trainees' hostel.

After the Chinese invasion, Hindustan Motors was asked to develop and produce some defence components. The then Defence Minister, YV Chavan visited Hindustan Motors. But over the

years, I believe Government of India had never been serious in involving private sector in design, development and manufacturing of products, particularly weapons and other high tech items used by defence forces. However now in 2011, I see the policy is slowly changing.

## **Jaipur for training**

Mr. Shiv Prasad, an engineer with years of experiences and reputation of efficient management left, because Mr. BM Sharda with a commerce background who was his assistant was made his boss when he had returned after a short training stint in UK. Sharda also was very good with me and appreciated my hard working nature. Very soon, Mr. BM Sharda attached the section machining bar components also with me. Let me confess I couldn't master the skill of modifying cams of the high speed bar automatic machine tools. And perhaps the reason was that by then I had become senior enough. I was not expected to work on the machines myself. I had the assistants who could do that for me. I got a little hesitant to put my hands on the machines.

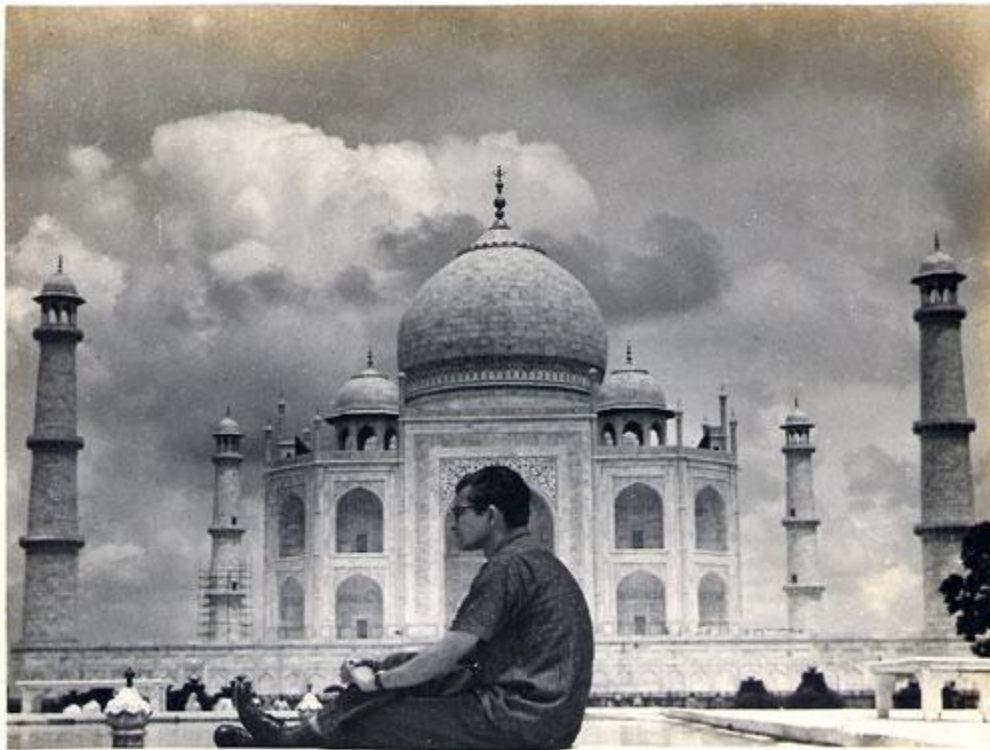
I can't forget one incident of those days. I was the first among the graduate engineers from 1960 and 1961 batches to get promoted as superintendent. The seniors didn't like that and went to Mr. BM Sharda to protest. They took my friend Sandip Mehta too along with them. The same evening Mr. Sharda called me, informed about the objection raised by my seniors and asked, "How's that Mehta was also with them? You have been kept on talking so high about him." Next day I sent a note to Sandip Bhai, "How would you have reacted if you would have been working for Dilip (his younger brother) and the same would have happened?" Sandip Bhai came running. He was really repenting. It was some other senior who had pulled him along in the group. Thereafter, we came closer. In 1967, I was asked to go to newly created Engine plant after I returned from UK. Soon thereafter Sandip left HM and immigrated to UK.

Mr. Sharda because of his background of production control took a special interest in designing and manufacturing of material handling and storage equipment. He initiated programme for manufacturing trolleys to transport various components from various stages of production. It was a lean period of routine car production. He wanted me to machine trolley wheels on the production machines. I was finding it difficult to get the convex on the outside of the wheel. I was trying various means. I was in the cutter regrinding section for getting a tool modified. It was 2AM in the night. Suddenly someone kept his hand on my shoulder. It was BM Sharda, He asked me to go home and rest. I felt really nice. He made me come out with him and walked together up to the common crossing talking on various aspects of material handling and then parted after wishing me a goodnight. It really touched me. I had later solved the problem by using the feature of reverse copying on the machine tool itself in a very innovative way that all the old timers appreciated.

Many new types of machine tools such as multi-spindle chucking as well as bar automatic machines were getting added. Mr. Sharda who was production manager sent me with two set up men to National Engineering Industries, Jaipur, and another BM Birla company for training in 1965. It had a battery of those machines since many years and had developed skill to maximize its productivity.



I have some sweet memories of my stay in Jaipur. My grandfather met me at Dehri-on-Sone station with my cousin brothers and handed over some sweets. I had travelled to Jaipur via New Delhi first time by first class. On arrival, I stayed in a hotel, but then Chander Prakash and Satish, who were also executive trainees and bachelors till then, took me to live with them. I celebrated my twenty sixth birthday in one of the best restaurants of Jaipur. Invitees were all the engineers of NBC. Chander Prakash took me to Agra too. We visited Taj Mahal and all places of interest such as Fatehpur Sikri and Dayal Bag temple. I still remember travelling to most of the places in tonga, the horse driven cart in Agra in those days.



In Taj Mahal in 1965

I visited Taj many times thereafter too, but I enjoyed the first one the best. We were there on a day with a full moon night. We had planned for that. We reached in the premises in the evening. Gradually with dawn of evening, it became dark. And then the full moon gradually rose in the sky slowly. Taj Mahal appeared to rise from the ground slowly and with the moon in full bloom, it was just a divine scene that we went on relishing and enjoying till it became too late to go to our hotel. We returned to the hotel.



With Chander Prakash at Taj Mahal in 1965

And how can I forget Ramgarh, a picturesque place where NBC staffs had organized a picnic with dalbati-churma that was all prepared at the picnic spot as the main attraction? I had become known and friendly to all the staff members, particularly engineers by then. Ramgarh reservoir provided the water supply for Jaipur city. It was really picturesque.



Photo Taken at RamGarh Water reservoir near Jaipur, 1965

Before returning from Jaipur, I had undertaken a tour covering Ajmer, Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Nathdwara, Rajasmand and Jaisamand, mostly by road transport. Roads in Rajasthan even those days were good, though not that wide. I liked Udaipur the best. With my love for the history and historical monuments, I enjoyed every place. The memory remains pretty vivid even today. I still remember, while returning from Jaipur I had missed my train because of a confusion arising out of change of date after midnight. I was really worried. But with help of my friends I could still manage to make the travel to New Delhi. I was in correspondence with Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, the famous politician from my district. I went to his residence and met with him. I saw a number of politicians of the time at his place. He was very courteous.

National Engineering in those days was known as National Bearing Co. It had very good manufacturing facilities. It had indigenized many bearing manufacturing machine tools and equipment. I met Braj Raj Rai of Jaso in the factory. He was one of the top executives in those days. Later on, Mr. Rai was moved to Hindustan Motors and came very close to me and Yamuna. He lived in the same residential complex. He was really very nice and kept on advising Yamuna to take care of me. But the end of Mr. Rai was a shocking incident of my life. One day, he was found dead on the steering in his car parked outside Hind Motor Railway Station. Perhaps after returning from Calcutta, he got a severe heart attack and couldn't survive that. Mrs. Rai called me and sought help. I made all the arrangements for taking his body to Patna as he had wished just few days ago during a conversation. I accompanied the body in ambulance and the family in a cavalcade of cars with some of my own men from the factory. His sons came to Patna. Finally, Rai was cremated in Patna.

On return from Jaipur, Mr. Sharda gave me another additional responsibility to help a service engineer from Kennametal USA to introduce throw-away tooling on all the machining operations to improve the productivity. It cut down the tool change time. I could get that done effectively and later on published an article on the subject in 'Engineering News of India'.

I continued with my technical improvements and innovations in everything coming under my span of control in Axle plant. I tried to debottleneck for smooth production. I encouraged the workmen to improve their skills. I educated. I also tried to financially help some real needy ones. But after finding that I was getting cheated I discontinued. I introduced the idea of organizing farewells for workmen for boosting morale. It was something unique in those days.



Farewell of SD Singh who worked in brake drum machining line

In September, 1965, I published an article 'Scrap control in Engineering Industry'. I had concluded that as few reasons contribute to the majority of scraps, some steps can reduce the loss due to scrap. Mr.R.J. Peterson, a former General Motors executive, was at that time at the helm of operation of Hindustan Motors. Somehow he got a copy of the article. He felt a need of the control on the scrap that was pretty high and costly. I was suddenly given a new job as his special assignee for scrap control with a circular from Mr. GC Bansal who was Works Manager on January 13, 1966. It was an assignment without any authority. As usual, I didn't get even a desk or any assistant. That special assignment became the nightmare pretty soon. Fortunately, I was moved very soon in operation.

The company was investing in capital goods to remove its bottlenecks of production capacity. it took a plan of sending the superintendents of various sections of machine shops to the factories of its collaborators in UK. I was the first among the executive engineers of 1961 batch to get into the second batch to go to UK.

### **Living in Hind Motor Colony**

Hindustan Motors Ltd. as it was quite common in India for a big industrial establishment in those days, had created residential facilities for all classes of its employees near the factory premises with all the basic facilities of education, healthcare and communication. More popularly, the



residential complex was known as Hind Motor Colony, and the railway station was Hind Motor. Lakshmi Narayan temple came up after I joined the company. The complex had a high school and another small temple in the labour colony. There were some shops that catered to the basic needs of the residents.



Lakshmi Narayan Temple in Hind Motor Residential complex, 2008

Employees coming from outside the residential complex used local railway trains. Many coming from the nearby villages were having bicycles of their own.

Very few among my acquaintances may know that I lived in HM's labour colony for a month with a number of workers in a single room. My grandfather knew one Sri Singh whose father was working for Birla Jute Mills. I started living in the labour quarter where he lived. Nand Kishore Chacha had come and arranged everything. All living there respected me because of my status and tried to provide the best that they could. I took my lunch in the factory's staff canteen but dinner with them. On weekends I would go to Birlapur to be with my grandfather and family. My biggest nightmare was with the toilet that was as usual very filthy.

I got my first salary and rented a house, Sarat Kutir, at 1 Panchanan Talla Road in Bally near railway station. Nand Kishore Chacha had made arrangement in the staff canteen of Bally Jute

Mills for my dinner every night. As Durga Puja was nearing, the demand for higher festival bonus by the union took an ugly turn. Workers struck the work and the factory declared a lockout before Durga Puja on October 12, 1961. That was a usual phenomenon in organized sector of the state in those years. The workers picketed outside the factory gates, threatened and prevented the employees including staffs and managers from entering the factory. The situation got so bad that the officers and managers also had to vacate the company provided residences inside the factory premises. The management had asked the staff members and officers to report to the head office in Calcutta and give attendance. I was living in Bally during the strike period.

It was really tough time for me. I had spent the money that I had received as my first salary in renting the accommodation. There was no sign of the ending of the strike. Both the communist-led union and the management were adamant. I used to get the news only from newspaper. Winter had set in. I didn't have even sufficient winter clothing and quilt. And over and above, I had to host Sahodar Pandey, a teacher acquainted from Birlapur. On October 16, I had brought Lakshmi Baba to show him the house. It was on a day when he was leaving for village. In evening I saw him off at Howrah. As the strike lingered, I went to Pipra. I also visited Patna, Bodarhi and Sasaram after returning to Bally on November 12. Baba had also returned to Birlapur. While most of the days of strike I stayed in Bally. I kept on visiting Birlapur. I visited HM's head office in Calcutta too. But Baba was still working in Kalipur as teacher there. He kept on visiting me on almost every Sunday. He also financially helped. Even his Rs 10-20 were very big amount both for him as well as for me. For him it was an additional expenditure for a young employed grandson, for me it helped sustaining me. Those were the days when one could buy a ser, about two pounds of milk for Rupee1.

We could know about the development of strike only through newspaper. The lockout was lifted on December 10, 1961 with help of the then government. The leftist union tried to stop employees to get into the factory and even assaulted some employees who tried to get inside the factory premises. Dr. BC Roy helped in running special local trains with police protection to carry factory staffs and workmen to Hind Motor. Many went in. The factory provided cooked food for those inside. Finally, the union had to yield and the strike was called off. But we didn't get paid for the strike period.

Soon after the strike, we, the executive trainees were allotted accommodation in the company residential area. I left Bally and came to live in Hind Motor, where I continued living for more than 35 years or so. Six of us were allotted a flat (Big Flat 32) that was meant for very senior officers. RP Dhingra, OP Khanna, and TR Murlidhar from my own batch of mechanical engineering at IIT were in the group of the five living there. SK Sharma was from Roorkee Engineering College and JA Selat from Madras institute of Technology, Guindy. KK Mangal of Jadavpur University was the member only for the sake of completing the number of boarders to six. He commuted from his father's house in Calcutta. He took only lunch with us.

The few initial months as trainees were enjoyable. It was an observational training of various departments in the factory. In evening we used to rush to the club and spent time in playing badminton and billiards. But very soon I got grossly involved in factory work, learning the finer tricks of production engineering and management in machine shop. While my friends enjoyed, I spent my time in factory working on machine tools by my own hands. However, I can't forget

few of the unique things of that group living of the flat. Mohan was our servant. He was a good cook. One day someone of us detected a hair in food and scolded him. Next day we found him clean shaved. And then one day one of us could discover a small lizard during lunch. We rushed to Dr. Amal Mukherji in Uttarpur in two rikshas. Doctor laughed and sent us after saying, 'if nothing has happened till now, don't bother, nothing will happen'. Mohan had left by the time. I just can't forget his delicious aalu-puri and tomato preparation. We used to hold competition for it and every time before we could finish for a result, the stock of input ingredients in the store used to get finished. I also remember how Nand Kishore Chacha had once consumed and appreciated the potato and egg-filled tomatoes before I could tell him.

I celebrated my twenty third birthday with 23 chickens cooked by Mohan. I wonder today why I spent so much for the birthday. Was it manifestation of my inferiority complex? I had been converted as non-vegetarian by Mukteswar Chacha and Nageswar who lived with him and cooked in Birlapur. Till IIT days I never took any non vegetarian item. Even my non-vegetarian friends used to avoid sitting next to me in dining hall, as I didn't like it.

I do also remember the humiliation of the country at the hand of Chinese in war that year. I had written a poem on the subject and prevailed over my friends to shun celebrating Diwali that year.

There was hardly anything for entertainment. We used to subscribe to a number of magazines including 'Filmfare'. Pretty soon we bought a small Philips radio too. I remember an instance that tells how we keep ourselves engaged and happy. Once we organized auction of the old copies of Filmfares. We had two issues of the magazine, one with Sadhana and the other with Saira Banu on the top cover. Both were the top actresses of that time. I was fan of Sadhana and TR Murlidhar liked Saira Banu. The bait went up to Rs 4 or so for those old copies while the price of a new magazine was only 25 paises (one fourth of a rupee) in those days.

On April 20, 1963, the group separated. TH (Trainees Hostel) flats were ready. There was big difference. It had just two bedrooms. We missed the huge drawing room of the Big Flat that we occupied as trainees. There were neither the huge sofa set, and dressing tables or wardrobes. I moved with RP Dhingra to TH 47. It was a third floor flat. Dhingra had a brilliant academic career all along. He would have been the topper of our batch in IIT, but for Prof. Chandiramani who went out of the way to push another student.



RP Dhingra in 1963

As I remember, RP Dhingra in those days was having his love affairs with Linda, the daughter of one American. Linda lived with her father Mr. Klatt in the colony itself. Klatt was from Marion and had been working in the heavy engineering division. Dhingra was working with him in those days. Dhingra kept on talking about their affairs. We had a skeleton of a Philips radio and I bought a sofa set from an auction shop. Mr. Klatt, a very mature father later on, had convinced Dhingra that he must not think of marrying Linda. It will be creating difficulty for him only. Klatt was very correct. Very soon RP Dhingra got into an arranged marriage with daughter of a legal luminary of Allahabad. After marriage he moved out of my flat to another one in the next staircase. I went with Mangal to his marriage in Allahabad. Unfortunately, the marriage never proved to be a great one. I remember them fighting in my own flat. I kept contact with Dhingra for a long time. Dhingra had come once in HM in Flat 4. Everytime I would come to New Delhi I would call him. A few times I called him to have dinner with me in hotel. However, in 1997 one day when I called him after coming to Noida, I came to know of his death.





Linda and June on TH 47

OP Khanna got married before we moved to TH. He got a separate flat that was at second floor. KK Mangal, who was the part of the group, continued taking lunch with us. TR Murlidhar was my neighbor across the staircase. He was one who used to join me for beer. We had one Dayaram as servant. One Saturday when we started sipping the beer, we found it watery. On investigation, it was revealed that Dayaram had consumed some and topped the bottle up with water.

During the same period, in one Durga Puja I joined OP Khanna, his wife Prabha, AK Jaggi and Mangal on a trip to Orissa visiting wonderful temple at Puri, Konark and Bhubaneswar. The temples and the other historical remains were then in its pristine best. However, we enjoyed the Puri beach and its bath the best.



OP Khanna, Mini, Prabha Khanna, Me, and Mangal

After Dhingra got shifted to another flat after the marriage, I got Bhagat and then Jaggi as partner in TH. I was very busy in factory. I was trying to pick up what I didn't learn in IIT, Kharagpur. I got ample of respect and appreciation from my friends, subordinates and even seniors. Sometimes, we went out too. It was in one such outing that I visited Shanti Niketan. I liked the place and many times thought of visiting it again with my kids, but it never happened. Bandel Church was another place that we once visited in those days.



From L, Bhagat, Me, and Jaggi at Bandel Church



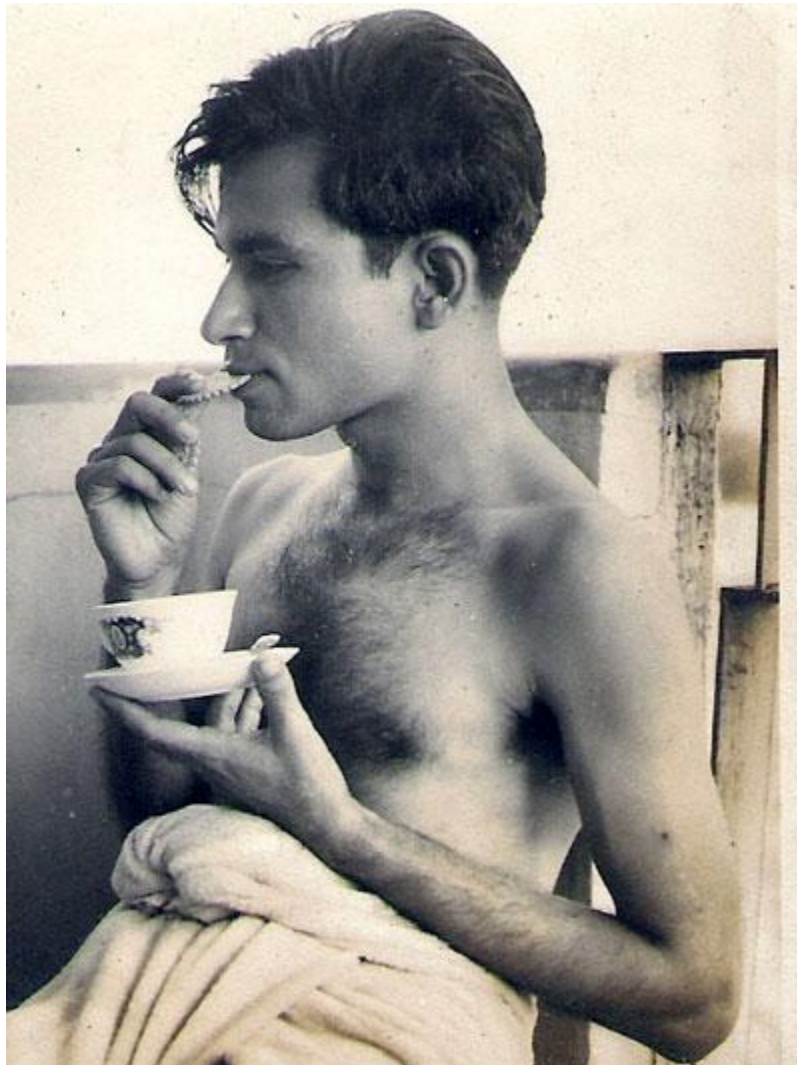




Me and Bhagat in Trainees' Hostel

The life as otherwise was monotonous. I was not finding myself ready to live with Yamuna. I had not told any of my friends that I was married. Lakshi Baba kept on insisting me to start a family life. But I kept on postponing. It was because of my obstinacy and immaturity.





Tea after returning from very hard work

I lived with my hobby of reading. By the time, HM Staff Club had established a good library. I subscribed Hindi weekly, Dharmyug, regularly and became member of the book club of Rajpal Sons that published many good books of Hindi at Rs 1 a copy. Books of reputed Hindi poets, Pant, Bachchan and Niraj were good past time for me. Interestingly, I never went through many English books, particularly fictions. I was not very comfortable with English.. Let me confess I didn't read even the Hindi translations of the famous books of the English or European literature. I could never remember the names of the characters. I didn't enjoy them. I was known for my love for Hindi even among my colleagues in Hindustan Motors. I acquired working knowledge of Bengali in High School and went through some books also. But I read only the Hindi translations of most of the famous ones of Bengali literature. It was in those days that I bought Urvashi of Ramdhari Singh Dinkar and I loved to read and recite the same in passionate manner.

## **First UK Visit**

And in 1966, I was sent to Vauxhall Motors, UK along with Mr. RD Nautyal for three months training. Mr. RD Nautyal was an engineer almost five-six years senior to me from BHU and was from sheet metal division. Mr. Nautyal had been to UK earlier also. According to the communication from M/s Hindustan Motors to Vauxhall Motors, Mr. RD Nautyal was designated as Manufacturing Manager and myself as Superintendent, Axle Shop. Other two members of the group were AK Bajpai, Assistant Industrial Engineer and LN Jhavar, Production Control Manager. Mr. Bajpai was from 1959 batch of IIT, Kharagpur. We all knew each other, but surprisingly during the whole period of training, I hardly met Bajpai and Jhavar. They were putting up with some Indian family that they never wanted to disclose. It was perhaps all because of the limited allowances that the government in those permitted. However, all the four were together in the bus in which we travelled to Ellesmere Port plant of Vauxhall on May 27, 1966.

I was the first from among the graduate engineers in machine shop who got that opportunity. A batch of old-timer superintendents from machine shop including, Naidu, Khalsi, Kishanlal and BL Mishra had already visited Vauxhall plants in UK. All these superintendents worked for me later on. The management decision really made me happy. Sandip Mehta and his father helped me in making the necessary purchases for the visit and buying warm clothe for my suit and getting that stitched. I remember one of the colleagues giving me his overcoat. In those days the government was very strict in sanctioning foreign exchange. I had received a meager amount in foreign exchange. If my memory is not failing, it was a rate of 60 pound sterling per month. I remember one of the colleagues had given me a 5 pound currency and Mr. Klatt who was an American expatriate working in Heavy Engineering Division had given me a cheque of US \$ 500. I paid at a rate of Rs 5 for a dollar and Rs 20 for the British pound.

I and Mr. RD Nautyal travelled together. For the first and last time perhaps, I stayed at Taj Hotel of Bombay naturally at the airline cost. We had taken a Quantas airway flight from Bombay to Rome. It was first time I was travelling in an aero plane. I had many embarrassing moments in the plane as well as in the hotel.

We had a stopover in Rome. I don't know why I was very much exhausted in the flight. The airline had arranged an excellent hotel accommodation for the night. I did not know what to do. Mr. Nautyal suggested and arranged a tour 'Roma by Night'. At least one incident of that night remained etched in the memory. The luxury bus took us to many places of importance, both historical and of entertainment including a restaurant cum night club. Even in the din inside the restaurant with lot of professional dancers around and with some really beautiful girls from some parts of Italy or Europe sitting across our table, I was dozing. Many a times, some of those girls shook me to get up and enjoy the dance and naturally the ambience. But they hardly succeeded. At the end we were dropped at the hotel. The room was like one of a royal palace. I slept to get up early in the morning to catch our flight to London.

Vauxhall had three plants. At Dunstable, it manufactured trucks and at Luton plant it produced passenger cars. I was in Dunstable between April 27 and May 10, 1966 with F Day, Manager, commercial axles.



With Managers of Axle Plant, Vauxhall Motors, Dunstable in 1966

It was mostly an observational training. I spent seeing the working of its sections machining and assembling truck rear axles' components. It was the first time that I came across high production machining facilities. However, I got the chance of seeing the working of first generation numerically controlled machine tools. Vauxhall was one of the largest manufacturers of trucks in Europe in those days producing 500 commercial vehicles a day. Every truck on the assembly line was different in some way from the other. Vauxhall gave whatever the customer wanted, any engine, any transmission or any special fitting for the required application. I moved to commercial engine production from May 11 to May 25 with Mr. Conolly who later on came to Hind Motor to work as expatriate.



With Managers of Vauxhall Motors, Dunstable, UK, 1966

From May 26 till June 24, 1966, I went around passenger engine and axle production areas in Luton plant. Let me confess that with no exposure of other than rear axle machining in Hindustan Motors, I could hardly learn effectively much in these areas. Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant was near Liverpool with the most modern facilities for manufacturing passenger cars. Vauxhall's training department arranged one day visit to the plant.

I could interact with the supervisors and engineers of various staff functions and came to know some supervisory management practices. I had noticed certain technical lapses in manufacturing processes of some components followed by Hindustan Motors and informed Mr. GC Bansal through a letter while I was in Vauxhall Motors. Interestingly, Mr. Bansal never acknowledged it neither took any action. Whatever I learnt at Vauxhall did help me at later stage.





At 10, Marsh Road Luton, with RD Nautyal in 1966

After reaching Luton from London by train, I with Mr. RD Nautyal stayed at a bed and breakfast guesthouse at 10, Marsh Road. I used to take a bus to travel up to the factory. I could afford only a fish and chips dinner those days in the daily foreign allowances that I received. Vauxhall used

to provide the lunch. Thanks to Nageswar of Birlapur and Mohan in early days of HM that I had turned non-vegetarian before visiting UK.



10, Marsh Road, Luton, UK Guest House 1966

I learnt some dining table manners and etiquettes from the boarders of the guesthouse. Initially it was annoying and embarrassing, and I felt humiliated but then I reconciled. In Rome one must behave as Roman to survive and succeed. It helped me for future assignments that was destined for me.

I do also remember the well built English land lady who was very generous to me. She took me along with her husband twice for outings on weekends. Once she took me to Birmingham and left me to explore the place before she picked me back again in evening. On another occasion she took me to a holiday resort, Swansea-on-sea in south of England. She also gave me her camera for the photographs that I have put here. It was she who arranged a visit to Luton Hoo, where I saw some Indian exhibits brought back to England by Britishers.

As far as I remember, I took another trip to meet one reputed professor of production engineering in an engineering *College*. I had written to him and he had replied and invited to meet him. It was a nice conversation but I couldn't dare to leave Hindustan Motors for higher education. It was perhaps the second time that I had again half-heartedly tried for higher education abroad, the first attempt naturally was after IIT for Illinois State University, USA.

As I didn't hear anything about the extension of the training, I booked my return journey from Luton itself. While returning I stayed in London with one of the acquaintances of Chandramani Mama who was a government employee in education. He was on a study leave in London and was staying in Indian Students Hostel. Mr. N Nanda, another colleague of mine who was in London in connection for the new paint shop that was coming up in Hindustan Motors. Nanda was one year senior to me in IIT and was also working in sheet metal division of Hindustan Motors. On his advice, I bought a German record player that remained with us for many years. I had also procured one or two shirts and a sweater in UK that perhaps all my sons wore when they were growing up.

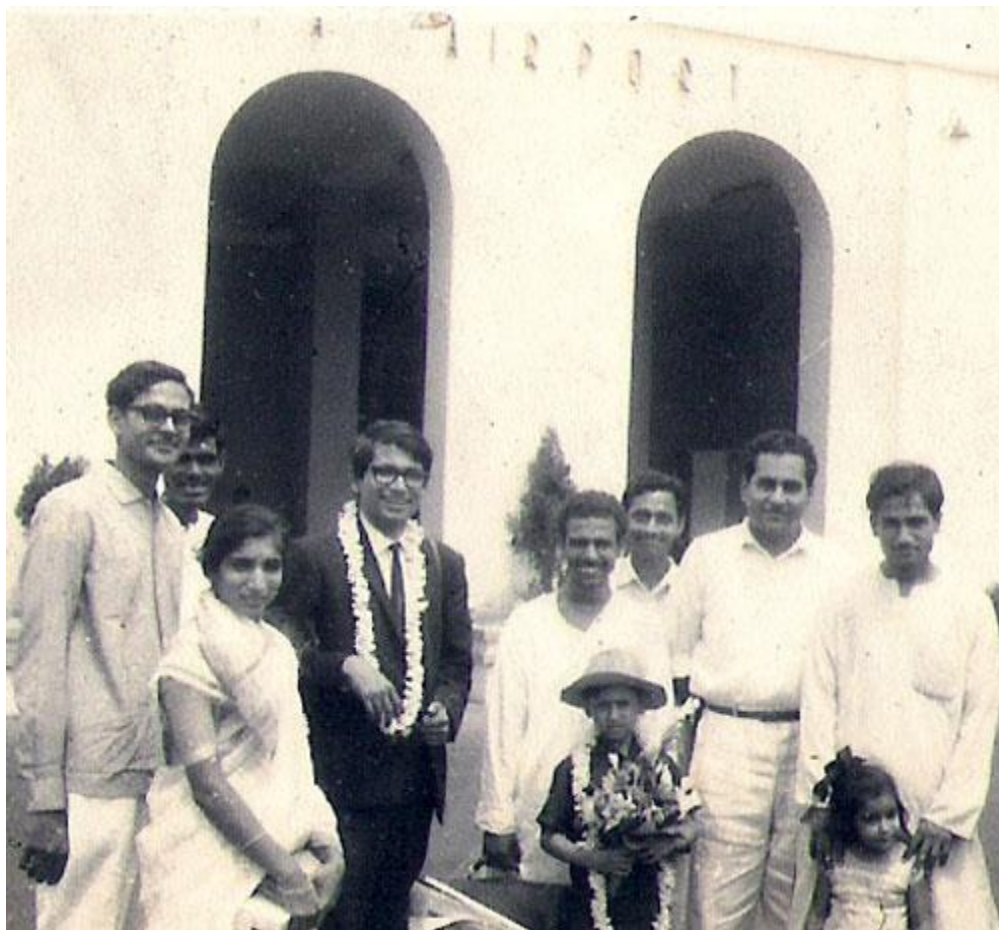
On way back to India, I visited Paris, Frankfurt, Berlin, Geneva and Cairo. In Paris, I stayed for a night at a youth hostel in one of its suburb. Frankfurt in those days was not at all impressive. But I liked Berlin; saw the famous church that was damaged during WWII and the famous Berlin wall and the gate too that separated West Berlin from the East one under Soviet Union then. Geneva was certainly the best place that I visited till date. The lake and the snow clad mountains all around were heavenly. I bought my first box camera, one Yashica in Geneva and used it in Cairo. Visits to Pyramids, Sphinx and the museum with the wonderful treasures of Tutankhamen, the child king are still vividly clear in my memory. An old man had asked me while I was visiting the museum an embarrassing question, "Why do Indians not eat beef?" I did try to explain, but he was hardly satisfied. However, the travel agents had charged a little too much for the accommodation in the hotel.





Near Pyramid, Cairo while returning from UK

I still remember the enemy like talk of Pakistani vendors at Karachi Airport. After knowing my nationality, he said to my Cambodian co-passenger, “Pakistan Cambodia Bhai Bhai, but India Pakistan no Bhai Bhai”. I never took any chance to pass through an airport in Pakistan thereafter. However, I still wish to go for visiting the remains of Mahenjadaro and Takshila.



On return from UK at Dum Dum Airport, Suresh Rai, Manju, Mukteswar and Nand Kishore Chacha



On Dum Dum Airport, my uncles Mukteswar Chacha, Nand Kishore Chacha with Manju and some workmen of Axle plant were present at airport. I gave a battery powered phili-shave bought in Geneva to Suresh Rai, the husband of the sister of Mukteswar Chacha, one of my youngest relatives who had come with Nand Kishore Chacha. Unfortunately, he got killed at very early age by some miscreants while returning from Buxar to his village.

## **Yamuna joins**

It was in 1955 that I was married with Yamuna. Because of my foolish weakness and lack of mental strength, I didn't declare myself as married in Presidency College, IIT, Kharagpur, and even when I joined Hindustan Motors. I have mentioned earlier about my grandmother telling Shri Braj Bhusan Pandey, one friend of mine from IIT, Kharagpur about my marriage when he visited Birlapur once. But it was not that we were not meeting and living as husband and wife.

It was perhaps in summer of 1960 that Jamuna Baba had agreed and fixed for Yamuna's 'dwarigaman' or 'gawana'. Gawana is Bhojpuri word for the practice of bringing the bride back to bridegroom family after some time of the marriage. It was a common practice in those days of child marriage. Through a telegram, Jamuna Baba had asked Lakshmi Baba in Birlapur to send me or take me to the village for the function on May4, 1960, as the date for gawana was May6. It was not known to me before I went to Jamshedpur for the summer training in Tata Engineering and Locomotive Co. (TELCO) starting from May1. Lakshmi Baba didn't know the place where we were staying in Jamshedpur. However Lakshmi Baba went to Jamshedpur to search me after receiving the intimation of gawana date. How could he find that? He knew of TISCO and went to its office, but failed to get any information. On return he even went to IIT, Kharagpur to find out about my whereabouts, but the institute and hostels were closed. He returned pained and morose. Even against the will of her father who was very angry because of my absence, Yamuna came to Pipra my village home. As I was told, Nirmal, my little younger cousin performed some of the rituals supposed to be carried out by husband in my absence. As none had agreed to go to bring Yamuna in my absence, Jamuna Baba himself had gone to Madhukarpur. In the meantime

I did not know all these developments. After settling down in the accommodation of Utkal Association, Jamshedpur with the friends, I wrote a letter to Lakshmi Baba. It was only through his letter that I knew the episode. One day I received a letter that my great grandmother was on death bed and she had been taken to Varanasi. The training was over. I came to Varanasi, but failed to locate where my great grandmother whereabouts. I returned to my village on June 10. I met Yamuna for the first time. I was really lucky, as she was beautiful and very good to talk with. I had not seen her even in the marriage or any time after that. Yamuna used to be in the Janani courtyard along with my aunties, mother and great grandmothers. My mother or aunty at dinner time would ask me to come to Janani courtyard for sleeping. That was the practice in those days. I lived for few days in Pipra. Lakshmi Baba wanted to take me to Madhukarpur to console the family, particularly my father-in-law and perhaps to convince them that I was not as bad as they might have been thinking. Interestingly, Lakshmi Baba had one more motive. He

expected that I would get a lot of money in Madhukarpur and that would meet my expenditure at IIT required at the beginning of the fourth year. I met and lived with Yamuna for few more times. Once in May, 1964, I visited the village home for the marriage of bua Ramdulari with Suresh Rai of Intawa and second time Dehri-on-Sone when Yamuna was there with my grandparents. Yamuna kept on shifting between my village and hers. We kept on corresponding too. I wish I would have preserved those letters. As Yamuna told me later on, my grandfather was very much interested in seeing me as a father. Unfortunately, it didn't happen till he was alive. For me till then, a success in professional career was the only goal.



Yamuna, her mother and Girija at Jakhini Mela

While returning from England I was in Geneva and walking along Geneva Lake alone. I saw a very old couple supporting each other. I started thinking about life as a philosopher. I was established and settled in job. I was respected for my hard sincere work and was known to everyone in one of the country's biggest company of the time. I was also getting a good salary. I had published a number of articles in engineering magazines. I had visited UK too. I decided to call Yamuna and go for a family life.

On my return from UK in July 1966, Sandip Mehta and his wife, Manju became the executor of the project. Manju Bhabhi went to Varanasi, her home town and informed Nand Kishore Chacha about my wish to take Yamuna to Hind Motor. I had already written a letter earlier to Nand Kishore Chacha informing that. There was some opposition in the family, particularly from Jamuna Baba who wanted it to happen in some auspicious time. It was 'sravan' considered as inauspicious for a new bride to go to a new place.

Yamuna came with Nand Kishore Chacha to Varanasi, lived with Manju's family and came to Hind Motor. Life changed. Many a times, I have thought about this unusual part of my life. Was it because of the prevailing practice in the family? Lakshmi Baba, my grandfather was in Birlapur since 1928=29. But my grandmother joined him there only in 1950, when I with Nand Kishore Chacha came to Birlapur for schooling. My mother lived because of her father's illness in Bodarhi since I was five. But my father came to live with her only after about twenty years. It happened after the death of her last uncle. As the story goes, my great grandfather Ram Pragash Baba had visited Birlapur once and saw the place where Lakshmi Baba lived in those days. Ram Pragsh Baba didn't find the place good enough for his daughter-in-law. Lakshmi Baba never insisted for bringing my grandmother thereafter. My father didn't move to Bodarhi as his uncle Jamina Baba never asked for it. Perhaps what happened with Yamuna and me was also destined. If I would not have got the company accommodation just after the strike in 1961, Yamuna would have joined me in my rented accommodation in Bally. Unfortunately none of my elders ever forced it to happen. If Lakshmi Baba would have come with Yamuna one day in the trainees flat, I would not have thrown them out.



First Photograph with Yamuna 1966

Yamuna picked up the urban life faster than what I had expected. However, perhaps I was over excited with the presence of Yamuna. In just one month we spent a huge lot with frequent lavish parties. Jaggi used to manage the finance in those days. I had to borrow money from my provident fund to pay him. Jaggi pretty soon left to live in another flat, as his marriage got settled. But I had not approached the department concerned for getting the flat in single name. One day when I had come for lunch, I saw a lock hanging on one door. Yamuna told me that someone from the estate management office had come and had locked it. I got very angry. I broke the lock and threw the same in the marshy land across the road from the balcony. Fortunately, no one dared to come again or enquire. By the time everyone who mattered in top organization of HM knew that I was already married and now my wife was there to live with me. Some had even rumoured that I had few siblings too.



TH 47 on top floor Trainees Hostel, during his 2008 visit

As the first thing we went to Digha, the sea beach near Kharagpur. Mehtas and Jaggi also accompanied. Beach of Digha was not that crowded but the water was not as good as that of Puri





On Digha Sea beach near Kharagpur,, 1966

While returning I showed Yamuna around the campus of IIT, Kharagpur where I had stayed for four years for a getting a suffix of engineer.



While returning from Digha with Sandips and Jaggi, 1966

We kept on visiting friends and relatives in around Calcutta. We visited Birlapur where I did my schooling. Mukteswar Chacha was employed there. But the most memorable was the nicety of Ram Lal Thirani, President of Birla Jute who not only recognized me but welcomed and treated us in the staff club. Mangal invited us to his Calcutta home. Yamuna met the family that was so good. We visited the parents and the family of Sandip Mehta too in Burrabazar.

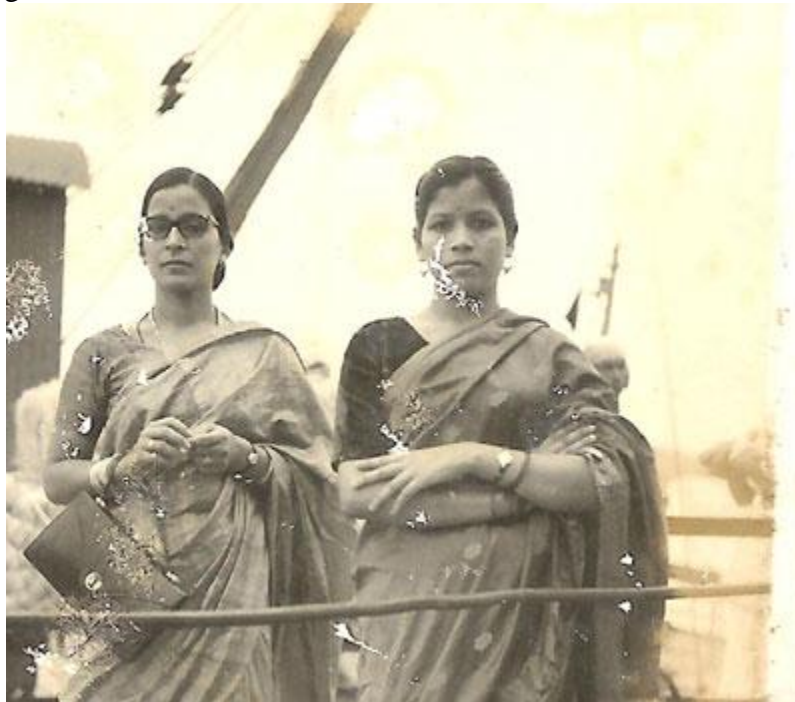
In December 1966, I took a long leave and spent time in Bodarhi with my mother. Yamuna was expecting her first issue. However, I had approached Jai Prakash Narayan from Hind Motor itself expressing my wish for working for his drought relief organization. He had called me to Patna. I went to Patna and was assigned by him to work with some foreigners in Noorsarai near Nalanda. They were trying to bore the dried wells of the villages to get back water in it for drinking. My engineer in me never agreed with their approach. But I still remember their enthusiasm and hard work in that odd circumstance. We were living a primary school room that was closed. But I could not continue with that tough life for long. It was very cold. I was not habitual to sleep on hard narrow wooden bench and live on food from the road side shop. I fell ill. Sarpanch, the village headman, headmaster of the local high school and Dr. Sinha came to see me. Dr. Sinha, a Bengali settler in the village, treated me. I got some relief and instead of continuing any more, I

returned. The village head, the doctor and the headmaster came to see me off at bus stand.



Sarpanch and Dr. Sinha at Noorsarai bus stop

I couldn't amass courage to report back to Jai Praksah Narayan. I missed an opportunity to get into social or perhaps political life. However, I did visit Nalanda and Rajgrih before returning to Patna. I bought a gift of Khadi sari in Patna for Yamuna.



Yamuna with Aunty in Birlapur near jetty



Ashok and Nirmal with aunty and Yamuna in TH47





Yamuna in TH 47, 1966



In Bodarhi's ancestral house Yamuna on left



In Mangal's house in Calcutta Yamuna in middle



Left; Yamuna in TH 47



Right: Yamuna with Jaggi, Sandip Bhai and Manju Mehta



Yamuna with Raj Kishore, her younger brother





Yamuna with Seema in her lap



Yamuna in Factory with Mrs. Saraf, Murlidhar and RC Agrawal

## Rakesh Arrives

Yamuna had to get hospitalized number of times during pregnancy. Those were the worrying time for me with no elderly person living with us to advise and help. Manju Bhabhi took Yamuna to the doctor in Burrabazar. Mehta's mother provided moral support.

On June 10, 1967, Rakesh was born in Hind Motors Hospital under the care of one Dr. (Mrs.) Mitra. Mother of Sandip Mehta was a big help with none from our family with us to advise and help. It was me who had failed to call someone. It meant the beginning of a new generation in the family. My mother came to Hind Motor for the first time after the birth of Rakesh and lived



with us for some time. She was the happiest with coming in of Rakesh. I was too busy with my work in the factory and hardly gave time for Yamuna and Rakesh. I do only remember few things. Rakesh as a child was fond of throwing everything that he could lay hand on through the grill outside of balcony in TH 47. Ours was the top floor. Yamuna also remembers how he locked her in kitchen one day and then opened the latch following the step by step instruction from her from inside. Rakesh kept on falling sick a little more frequently in his childhood. In Hind Motor, we used to rush to Hind Motor Hospital, but then to avoid side-effects we started going to a homeopath, Dr. Rakhit across the railway line. But more troublesome was the situation when we visited once Bodarhi with him. I had to walk miles across the field to get some medicines from some homeopaths or to contact some *ojhah* as a desperate father. The situation has hardly changed even today in 2011 with no healthcare facility in the Bihar's villages that I know.



With Yamuna in New Flat15

And how can I forget the merciless tearing of many of the car books that I had brought in from UK and my enjoying the same. Rakesh loved songs. Jaggi used to hold Rakesh's two hands and sing, and Rakesh kept on jumping untiringly on the tune of the songs of Jaggi. I remember many incidents related to him. As a first child he got perhaps the best attention. How can I forget Sesar taking him in my office in Engine Plant once and his cool sitting on my revolving executive chair? When he grew up, we visited once Birla Science Museum. It had a TV studio for kids. Rakesh promptly volunteered to go ahead and sing a good song that received a good response from the fellow visitors.



Rakesh, The Photo I like most



Rakesh with the photograph of Lakshmi Baba



Various Moods of Rakesh





Rakesh crawls





Rakesh in swing that was in TH 47



Left: Rakesh in seat Right: Yamuna with Rakesh Indira Murlidhar with Rohini

When we got Rakesh, TR Murlidhar and Indira were also blessed with a daughter Rohini. As the nearest next door neighbor, we were close. Yamuna was also friendly with Indira, though for Indira talking in Hindi was pretty difficult. Yamuna did neither know Kannad nor English. Indira was a post

graduate in mathematics. But both had overcome the hurdle very easily and could communicate well enough. Yamuna remembers how Indira used to call Rakesh her future son-in-law in those days. But the real interesting incident that I heard happened with my mother. One evening, I returned from work. My mother who was there came to me and said, "Bachawa (son), they don't have any land." I wondered how she came to know of it. Actually my mother and the mother of Murlidhar who was also there in those days had talked to each other. Even though one knew only Kannad and the other only Bhojpuri, they could communicate the basic information. Was it not strange? We mostly had a servant to help Yamuna. Sometimes, we got some girl from among our relatives of Pipra, Madhukarpur or Bodarhi. Lakha was one such who was with us for few months. She was the daughter of Late Sankar Dyal Rai, who happened to be a distant maternal bother in relation with a house with common courtyard with us in Bodarhi.



Yamuna with Rakesh and Lakha of Bodarhi



Yamuna with Rakesh in garden of Hind Motor Temple



Rakesh getting dressed by Lakha of Bodarhi

I tried to capture every aspect of the childhood of Rakesh and the joy of Yamuna of those days in the photographs that came out Yasica that I had got from Geneva. It remained with me for a long time and served till perhaps in 1982, I bought my first auto focus canon in Rome. Later on I gave that Yasica camera to a young draughtsman, who was also a trekker in corporate project planning office. It could take only rolls for 12 photos. We kept on visiting our Bodarhi and/ or Pipra almost regularly in those days.



Going to Pipra Tonga at top and car at bottom





Growing Rakesh

As Rakesh grew, he could easily live with others when he was just a kid. For days, he lived with Patabhi's children when Yamuna had gone to the village. Patabhi worked for me. He was an engineer from Andhra and very close to me. He had two kids a daughter, Sailja and a son, Gangaiya. Her wife hardly knew Hindi at that time. Later on, Rakesh had also travelled and lived with the family of Mrs. MC Malani in Darjeeling for few days and became their darling. MC Malani was working for me and living in the same staircase.

### **In New Engine Plant**

Interestingly very soon after my return from UK's training trip for axle manufacturing, I got shifted to New Engine Plant. It happened after Yamuna had joined me. One evening when I had returned after my work I got a message from Mr. NK Birla to meet him in Engine plant. Mr. Birla in those days was the second most powerful executive in HM after Mr. SL Bhatler. He was personally taking interest in Engine Plant that had been relocated in a new spacious building. Mr. RD Nautyal who had been in Vauxhall Motors with me had taken over as Manager, Engine Plant. Mr. Birla asked me to work as assistant manager with immediate effect. Mr. Birla was an interesting person with all his biases but having very good trouble shooting capability. Even with not much formal education, Mr. Birla was perhaps more technically oriented than Mr. Bhatler who was a qualified engineer.

New Engine Plant was a newly constructed well-designed building with high roof to take care of heat in summer unlike the older machine shop that had very height roof making that very much uncomfortable in summer and rainy season. After the engine facilities moved to new plant, the machine shop got re-laid out for the machining and assembly of axles and transmissions. In Engine plant, new and high production facilities had been created for the machining of cylinder blocks and cylinder heads of car engines with number of transfer machines from Cross Inc., USA. In other machining areas such as those for Crankshaft, Camshafts, Connecting Rods, some new and advanced machine tools had been added to balance the production or to replace the old machine tools for increasing the production or for improving the quality. The rest of the machine tools were old ones. For truck engines, the facilities were entirely new and were still under tryout when I had joined the plant. The plant was divided in various sections based on its manufacturing activity.

Mr. Nautyal asked me to start with the bar automatics section that I was conversant with since old machine shop days. But gradually I thrust myself with my hard work and new ideas and took over the effective control of all the sections. I was the only who could do that with my total dedication for working any odd hours and getting into troublesome situations. I had developed a knack for debottlenecking any high cycle time machining operation. I believed that there was no substitute to an intelligent hard work.

It was for the first time that transfer machines were brought in production of cylinder blocks and cylinder heads in automobile plants in India. It replaced a large number of the general purpose or special purpose stand alone machine tools used for the machining of those complex components. Unit cycle time was in single digit minutes. Handling of the components getting machined from castings from one station to the next had become automatic. The area remained a showpiece for a long time for visitors. All the VIPs were specially shown the transfer machines of cylinder block. Hindustan Motors was learning to use the contemporary world class and a totally new technology. It employed, for the first time two dozen workmen with diploma in mechanical engineering to operate the system. Unfortunately, the union leaders didn't allow it to reach its designed capacity. Later on, I could learn its drawbacks and limitations too. It couldn't accommodate for engineering change. It was a difficult task to accommodate the machining of cylinder blocks and heads when HM had to come up with diesel engine. I could also realize that the selection of the many of the machine tools, particularly those for the truck components with so low production was not right. Hindustan Motors was learning production engineering and the collaborators have not advised rightly. Or perhaps to build an image, BM Birla vetoed for this large scale production technology and spent for the white elephants.

Mr. Nautyal brought another assistant in Mr. JN Malviya from the old machine shop so that the two of us could rotate in two shifts. Mr. Malviya had perhaps graduated from the BHU College of Engineering that Nautyal attended. But still I kept on working for 10-12 hours and taking all the technical and managerial decisions. I kept on improving productivity of each and every machine tool and its operations. It had become my passion. I could challenge any operation that was causing constraints in production. I introduced most of the new machine tools that were still idle waiting to be integrated when I had joined. Interestingly, on one hand I got rewarded for the same by some additional monthly remuneration in cash by Mr. SL Bhattar, and on the other hand I didn't get the increment one year as I was getting more than what was promised in my initial

agreement for working as executive officer that I had signed. As usual, there were many among the peers who didn't like my way of working and kept on complaining against me. I suffered a lot because of the company's intense internal politics of individual executives.



A Farewell Party in Engine Plant

Soon after I had joined 'New Engine Plant', Hindustan Motors had organized its inauguration. Roger Smith, chairman of General Motors visited the plant. It was perhaps the most memorable official function organized by Hindustan Motors in Uttarpara plant. Dharamvir, the then Governor of West Bengal also came in for it.

While working in Engine Plant, I came across an advertisement about the Production management fellowships offered by the government of West Germany in 1971. I talked to Mr. SL Bhattar for sponsoring for it. He did it and I went to New Delhi for appearing for the interview that was arranged in National Productivity Council building on Golf Link Road. I stayed with Rustogi who worked for me in HM and had left few months earlier. Next day I went for the interview, that that was scheduled for 10 A.M. I reached in time. The candidates kept on waiting. It was a real bad experience. I went to the library and spent some time. By the time my turn came, it was around 5PM. I was really very shore and annoyed. At the outset, the chairman one Wanchoo asked me about the reason of poor quality of Ambassadors that HM was known for and produced. I went to an argument with the chairman. "Sir, it is because we have not learnt the car making as you have not learnt the art and science of interviewing. We had to wait hours for ten minutes interview without even a cup of tea. A public sector company HMT produces radial drill and its quality is doubtful. We use the same machine. How can HM produce good quality?" I returned and Rustogi took me to a movie. I knew I wouldn't get the fellowship and I didn't.

After working hard and assuming myself as indispensable for running the Engine Plant, I expected some promotion. I asked for a leave to go to my village home for Holi. Mr. Nautyal granted it after some hesitation but did also tell that I might have to return sooner as I might get more responsibility. While I was holidaying, I got a mail from my well-wisher, Sesar Singh. RD

Nautyal had been promoted as Production Manager-Mechanical Division. Mr. BP Jain who headed Tool Room had come as Manager of Engine Plant instead of me. I felt bad but returned. After absenting for few days Yamuna advised me to go to work under Mr. BP Jain. He, after all, was two years senior to me in IIT and was my boss in tool tryout department too. I started working reluctantly. Unfortunately no one helps the aggrieved in such cases and that is more so in a private organization. Mr. Nautyal later had told me that Mr. Jain was brought in by Mr. BM Pant, the Works Manager to checkmate Mr. GC Bansal.

Mr. BM Birla, the Chairman of Hindustan Motors had a weakness for employing foreigners, mostly the retired ones from the factories of General Motors, USA or UK. According to some he wished and loved the white men bowing to him, as he has done to the white men when the country was not independent. For some time, one Mr. Flynn was the overall head of operation of Hindustan Motors. I got many of my ideas executed in his name for improving the productivity. I dropped the third shift working and also got implemented multi-machines operation in Engine Plant. One clown also had come with Flynn. His name was Brown. He looked after crankshaft machining. He hardly knew his job. I could get very few foreigners who were really knowledgeable. Even Flynn didn't have the depth of technical knowledge that I expected in him. It was clear when he started trying out the possibility of machining aluminium cylinder head on the transfer machining line that HM had got designed and acquired for machining car cast iron cylinder head.



In Dinner Party of Brown of GM on L and Nautyal on R





With Bergmann, BP Jain and Superintendents of Engine Plant in Brown's Dinner party in Calcutta

Brown had given a good dinner one night for all the senior officers of the plant in New Kennilworth in Calcutta where he lived during his tenure. As I heard later that he married someone and went to Australia.

### **Rajesh Arrives**

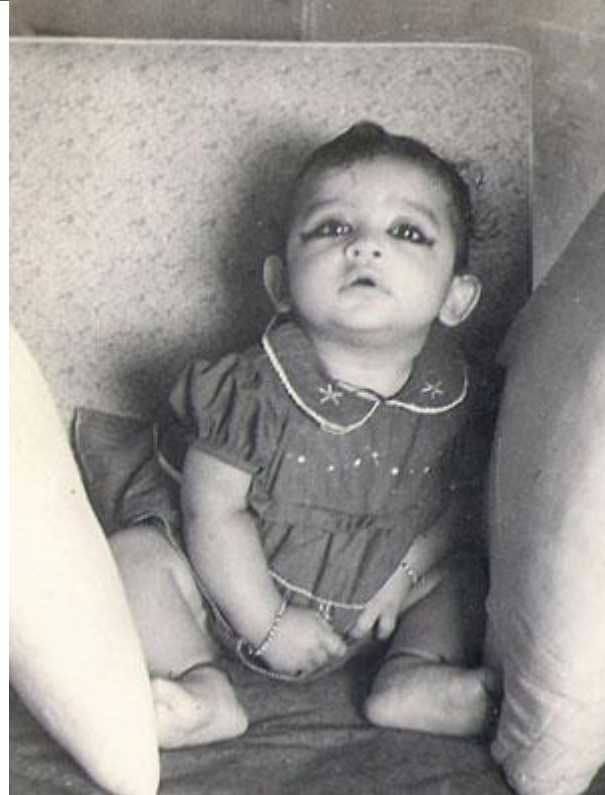
I and Yamuna decided to have another issue to provide company to Rakesh. I couldn't have thought of Rakesh remaining alone like me to my parent. Yamuna became anemic during the pregnancy. Rajesh arrived on May 23, 1970. But I can't but narrate an event of that time. We were in Trainees Hostel. Yamuna was pregnant. The union declared strike, and the management

announced a lock out. One evening I came to know that the union picketers are going to attack the Trainees' Hostel in the night. I took a lead and appealed to all the residents to come down and be at the ground floor near the staircase to face any eventuality, as the management was not going to take any measure for our security. Very soon, we found the water connection and electricity disrupted. I with few of the residents went to the flat of Mr. MV Vaidya, the factory manager to get a solution. Interestingly, that area at a distance of 30 metres from our place had the electricity and water available. Fortunately, nothing more happened that night. Next day, Mr. GC Bansal sent his children and called me. I refused to go. Later on, I came to know that Mr. SL Bhattar, the president of the company had asked Mr. Bansal to dissuade me from getting involved in making of an officers' union. For the first time my leadership had scared some. The situation soon got normalized and the factory started operation. Mr. SL Bhattar called me in his office and enquired about the event. I said in plain word, "Sir, I might be an employee of Hindustan Motors, but my wife, my son and the one who was to come, are not. I would never tolerate any inconvenience to them at any cost. And I was not interested in starting any union. No union or management executive can make my views changed." The incident made me known and popular too among the officers.



Rajesh





Rajesh in various moods





Rajesh! Why are you angry?



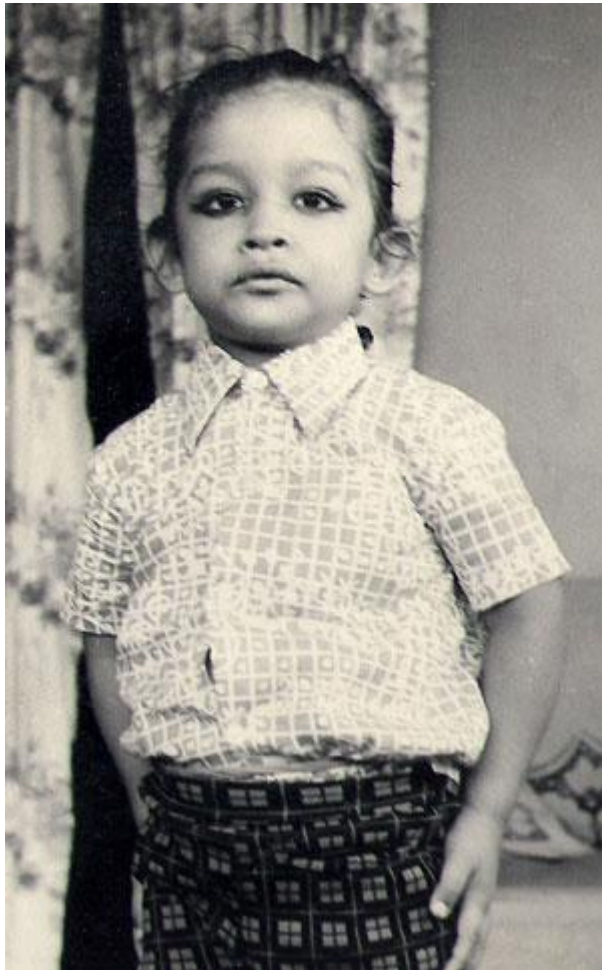
What's worry? Rajesh!



Photo: Rakesh Kisses Rajesh in TH 47



Rakesh and Rajesh in two wonderful acts



Rajesh in his unique moods Right: A Birthday Cake





Rakesh and Rajesh



Rajesh with Yamuna in TH 47



Rajesh with Bahadur in Trainees' Hostel 47



Yamuna with Rajesh in lap and Rakesh standing

Rakesh liked the arrival of Rajesh. There was none from family again to help during that time in Hind Motor. But again the mother of Shri MC Malani who was living in the same staircase provided the motherly assistance and advices during and after delivery to Yamuna. One Bahadur was there at home to look after Rakesh. And Sesar Singh also helped. I was very impractical. When Yamuna asked something to keep drinking water in hospital, I sent a huge earthen pitcher through Sesar. That became a point of laughing for a long time.

And pretty soon we got moved to New Flat 15 that had better accommodation, but again at top floor of the building. However, it meant a longer walk of about a kilometre or more for the factory or to get any household requirement. I was not having any vehicle by that time. The road connecting this cluster of flats with the main habitation was long. Another road cutting short the distance came only after a year or so.



A formal photograph while in NF15

### **In Axle Plant Again as Manager**

I was shore for the failing to get my promotion in Engine Plant and the way an outsider, BP Jain was brought in. It took time but I got an opportunity. I found Mr. SL Bhattar alone one day in the lobby of Engine Plant. I went to him and asked a straight question. “With all my hard and smart work of bringing about many productivity improvement projects, why was I denied the promotion as Manager, Engine Plant when I was promised that and why did you bring an outsider ?” He avoided a straight answer. “Don’t you know that Khalasi and Naidu failed, though I promoted them in Axle and Transmission areas?”

“You can’t compare them with me. Moreover, it was the management’s fault that instead of promoting the graduate engineers working on shop floors for many years, it promoted old-timers who were good workers but could never make good managers.”

Both- Naidu and Khalasi, were average to good technicians with no formal education and managerial quality. Patabhi, ND Daga and HR Gupta were good engineers in Axle Plant. In Transmission Plant too, there were some. Mr. Bhattar couldn’t say much and kept quiet. The management of Axle Plant that I had set with so much of my hard labour before shifting to Engine Plant, had collapsed because of internal politics of managers and their coterie. Axle Plant needed a head.



Almost after working for four and a half years in engine Plant, through a circular on May 15, 1971, I returned to Axle plant again as Manager. Mr. Bergmann, the American boss had some objection. Mr. RD Nautyal, my boss and Production Manager then responsible for three plants of mechanical division, explained the reason of the change. That was the way Mr. Bhatte worked. I got an additional section of Gleason's bevel gear manufacturing used in rear axles of car and truck to look after this time.

I remember one incident vividly. I could talk frankly to the legendary BM Birla, when he was once visiting the factory. He had enquired about the large number of scrap truck axle housings that he saw. I told him about the poor quality of the castings that had large size of blowholes in it. Many a times as per the practice, he never got the right information. Interestingly, the foundry near Bombay, which supplied the castings, was of another Birla. All senior executives including Mr. Bhatte and Bansal were scared of talking with BM. In Gleason section, he wanted to know from me the difference of formate type and the latest helixform hypoid gears. I explained. And he then asked me to keep in contact with him and meet the demand of spare parts in the market. I was very poor in going close to the defacto owners of HM though I got many opportunities. Was it my ego or adamancy?

Initially, I was very reluctant to take the responsibility of Axle plant again because of the extremely deteriorated discipline of workmen and morale of supervisors along with mean managerial politics that had killed all that I had established earlier with my hard work. But Yamuna helped me to reconcile. I started again with my old colleagues. Mr. RD Nautyal was the Production Manager-mechanical with Mr. BP Jain, TK Bose, and me as Managers of Engine, Transmission and Axle Plants respectively. Mr. TK Bose was of Mr. Bansal batch from Jadavpur University and had started as head of Tool Control few years ago in Hindustan Motors.



Farewell of Mr. JM Khanna, then Area Manager, Axle Plant



Farewell of Sukla of Gleason Line

While working on shop floor over years, I came across a large number of highly skilled workmen who could do wonder if properly encouraged even though they had hardly any formal education, what to say a technical education.



In a social function in Uttarpara

It was 1972. Yamuna was again pregnant. We were hesitant about the third child. At one time we decided to get Yamuna aborted. Dr. (Mrs.) Barman had privately checked her and agreed. She was hoping to get good money for the task. However, good senses prevailed over us and in a hope of getting a female child we decided to go ahead with pregnancy and delivery.

The year was significant for many reasons.

It was May 1972. One day I was on a plant round in Axle Plant. I got an urgent call from my neighbor, Mrs. Dokania informing me that Rajesh had fallen from my residence on third floor on the road. I was shocked. The plant closed for some time. People rushed to the Hind Motor Hospital. I also went hoping that the worst would have happened. But God was certainly on our side. Except for some bruises, nothing had happened. Dr. Ghosh, CMO in those days helped us and took Rajesh in his own car to various doctors in Calcutta to establish if there was any internal injury that can become fatal later. Rajesh had proved his toughness and made us happy again. His birthday that year on May 23 was celebrated with additional pomp and show. We expressed our obligations to the Almighty and His aides through many manifestations. Interestingly, Rajesh used to sit on the parapet regularly. On the fateful day, Yamuna had given bath to him and in few seconds when Yamuna was away for a towel, Rajesh fell through the opening in the grill four floors down straight on the concrete road. We locked the grill forever and threw the key away. The story of this miraculous incident remained a hot subject in the community for years. However, it was really nightmarish for us for many months. It only strengthened my faith in the Almighty.



New Flat 15 on top floor, Rajesh fell from the opening in grill





Rajesh fell from an opening in this balcony grill at a later date



Rajesh seving his friends

When we were preparing for the birthday celebration of Rakesh on June 10 that year, AJ Bhattacharya, my friend of Jadavpur University living on the ground floor of the block in front informed me about the bonus car that I had received from the company.

### **Anand Arrives, Trio Completed**

Anand arrived on July 20, 1972. It was a hat trick.



Anand in his cradle



Trio with Anand in Yamuna's lap



Anand taking his feed



Anand saluting

Perhaps, the bonus car was waiting for serving Anand. Anand got very sick after few days of his birth. We got extremely concerned. I had to take him to many doctors in Calcutta. I pitied Anand about his intake of antibiotics at that tender age. Finally, one doctor suggested me to take him for a change. Yamuna took him to her village, Madhukarpur. And surprisingly, Anand recovered and came back.



WBG 8287 that served Anand during his childhood

Interestingly, Anand had been named Rajiv initially. On advice of our pandit, Yamuna made me change it to Anand. According to the pandit, it becomes difficult to find out an auspicious day and time for the person with a name starting with 'R' to perform religious rituals.



Union executives never liked me. I was tough and expected discipline. I expected them not to meddle in technical issues and in execution of productivity improvement projects. I was never partisan but some in union were bent on creating bad image of mine including accusing me for giving undue benefits and showing favours to my men. Most of the trouble makers were the workmen with little job knowledge and lazy by nature.

Pre-festival months were always troublesome. Labour unions would demand unreasonable amount of annual bonus. The management would not agree. Unions would call strikes. The management would declare lock out.

1973 saw an unprecedented labour militancy. It all started with an accident in one of the section under me. An operator was injured badly as his hand glove got caught in a milling operation. Actually, he wouldn't have used the loose hand glove for that operation. But the workers, instigated by the union, made a big issue out of it and complained that they are being threatened and pushed to increase production and that was the cause of the accident. The workmen of the section slowed down the production with support from the union. When all negotiation failed, on advice of Mr. SL Bhattar, I suspended a number of them. As a manager I was the one who had signed the order. One day when I was in office they surrounded my office. Very soon all over the plant the workmen stopped working and moved towards the main office. When I came out of the office, some followed me. And very soon some started throwing missiles on me. They marched towards the main office, went out rampage, burnt a number of cars in the parking area and damaged office furniture and equipment in the main office. As I had not brought my car that day, I started walking towards my residence. As reported later, some rogues among them wanted to inflict serious injury to me and had thrown a big flower pot at me. Some well-wishers kept on covering me and thus saved me. I escaped the worst with some minor injuries. Thereon, the union struck work. The company declared lock out. RP Dhingra who was working in Heavy Engineering division also got hurt in the mishap while coming out of the shop. Dhingra, soon after, left HM.

I had decided to leave the company. When the strike was withdrawn after certain negotiation, Mr. Bhattar prevailed over me. After few days, I went back to work. Mr. Bhattar was good enough to walk with me on the shop floor talking with a number of workmen and scolding them for creating the trouble. Later on, someone told me that even some officers were involved in my assault. As usual, I forgot everything and soon got busy again with the work.

Hindustan Motors for some years faced a third catastrophe called flood also along with strike and lockout. That was the year when Naxalites had also formed a union in the factory. While we were tense, the children enjoyed the flood. My brother-in-law with his family had moved to our flat from his accommodation that was under water. There was no direct road connecting the new flats with the rest. One day when Raj Kishore was going towards his quarter to bring in some essential items, we saw him getting caught in the currents of the flood water. We got scared but he had managed to cross safely. I asked him on his return not to go by that route thereafter.

While staying in New Flat, I went for another nightmare. It was on a New Year day. I was trying to take Yamuna for treat. I parked my car on Hind Motor Railway station. However, when I tried

to climb the ramp, I couldn't. I came to Hind Motor Hospital. Doctor on duty declare that I was grossly anemic. I would not have driven myself. I was having piles for many years. But it had gone acute. My hemoglobin level had gone down to 4%. Against all my resistance, Yamuna and Dr. Ghosh got me admitted in Hind Motor Hospital. Doctor got blood for transfusion. I showed a symptom of serious allergy. Mr. NK Birla got me shifted to Calcutta Hospital. I remained in hospital for about 15 days. Dr. SK Agrawal operated on me. HR Gupta was my assistant then in Axle Plant. He went out of the way and helped Yamuna in getting me treated properly. Because of the exemplary care from Yamuna I got ready to go to work within a month. But very soon I got an attack of serious jaundice. It was perhaps due to the blood transfused for the operation. I decided to go to Bodarhi. Yamuna was already there in Madhukarpur. The factory doctors were hesitant to allow me to travel, but I insisted. One another reason of the doctor's hesitance was the impending Railway strike called by George Fernandez. I went to Bodarhi via Sasaram. With the medicines prescribed by Sasaram's Dr. Misra and the litti-chokka (without oil) prepared by Yamuna, I got my hunger back and jaundice vanished.

Many had advised us to change the flat 15, when things were going odd. According to them, it was inauspicious. It was a flat that the company had allotted to Sita Ram Shah, a two years senior in IIT. He did never live in it and then had expired.

Hindustan Motors remained a political battleground for me all the years till I was in operation. My peers, who were all very seniors and looked after other plants, envied and created obstacles, sometimes even connived to humiliate me. I kept working harder than others and keeping myself updated by going through all the available literatures on the subject. I was lucky to have good bosses too. Mr. SL Bhatler, Mr. NK Birla, Mr. RD Nautyal, all liked me. Once Mr. Nautyal had asked me how I could increase production so easily with the same machine tools and men. Mr. NK Birla was effectively looking after Hindustan Motors in those days. He had started a performance evaluation index for all plants. Many of my colleagues got envious when my plant kept on being judged as the best performing plant.

The manufacturing of steering components was under Transmission division that Mr. TK Bose headed. A new model of steering got introduced for ease of the driver. One of the major components, the steering case got a complicated machining process. It became a bottleneck holding the car production. Mr. BM Birla called Mr. Bhatler, Bansal and Nautyal for the same. They tried the best but couldn't overcome that. Mr. Nautyal got handed over the section manufacturing car steering component and assembly to me. I was surprised that Mr. TK Bose who used to look after it, agreed. It was a headache for Mr. Bose. Production schedule were not being met. After I took over, I asked Mr. Bansal to get a fixture manufactured in Tool Room as I desired. He agreed and got it done; though initially DK Ramamurthy hesitated. I debottlenecked just one operation adding a pre-machining operation and got rid of the trouble. My work was my only passion in those days. I wanted to prove that even a boy from an ordinary family could do what many from likable pedigree couldn't do. Mr. TK Bose was a great man manager; I was more inclined to technical solution. Whenever any worker challenged me against meeting a production target, I used to play with the cutting parameters and got the cycle time reduced where he couldn't have done anything. As such most of the time they run the machine tools at minimum speed and feed instead of the optimum without appreciating that it meant a lot of cost because of resulting poorer tool life. During my tenure as manager of Axle Plant, I developed

and published a paper, 'How a Supervisor's Diary can help improving the performance?' Mr. NK Birla liked the idea and got the diaries printed and distributed to each supervisor. I had conceived and designed 'The Supervisor's Diary'.



Anand and Yamuna



Anand posing formal photograph





Anand going to School in New Flat 15



Anand shares sweet with friends at birthday in New Flat



Rajesh and Anand in New Flat 15, Hind Motor

I had got the bonus Ambassador car from Hindustan Motors in 1972 after nine years in job. I had to pay hardly Rs ten or twelve thousand, the book value. The company used car as usual for bonus car had undergone total rebuilding. For all practical purpose it was a new car but for the registration number WBG 8287. But I didn't have even that much saving. I had to take a loan.

I always travelled to Pipra or Bodarhi by it. It never troubled or failed to start, even when once I kept it in Pipra waiting for almost a month.

I liked travelling in car as I hated the crowd at railway station. Besides with a car at hand, I got an improved mobility even in the village. Once I was in Bodarhi on holidays. I was sleeping in the courtyard. Suddenly I found my mother coming and telling me if I could take one of the elderly persons to Dehri-on-Sone. He had a paralysis attack. My car was parked in Dawath Police Station, as it was not possible to take it in the village. I took the gentle man to the hospital

in Dehri-on-Sone. I returned very late in night from the town to Bodarhi. My mother scolded me for travelling that late. It was really something I would have avoided. The road was bad and dark for all the distance of about 40 kms. I used to drive myself those days. I went that year to Arrah to meet Shiw Pujan Rai who was an MLA and a relative as well as friend of Dr. Ram Shubag Singh, one time minister in Pandit Nehru ministry. I took my mother and Chandramani Mama to Varanasi. The same year one of my grandmothers, the wife of Jamuna Baba died. I was in Bodarhi. I went to Pipra to attend the function. While returning, I met with an accident with a truck on Arrah-Sasaram road. I can very well confess that I was never a good driver nor I am even today.

It seems I grew madly workaholic in Hindustan Motors. I wonder today how I could work for more than twelve hours for all the days many times a week and for many years when I was looking after production activities of the mechanical division of the plant.

One year Hindustan Motors faced a third catastrophe called flood along with strike and lockout. That was the year when Naxalites had also formed a union in the factory. While we were tense, the children enjoyed the flood. We were in New Flat 15.



Rakesh and Rajesh enjoying flood in residential complex, HM



Anand has lifted his friend in flood water at New Flat



Trio with Yamuna and RK Agrawal near Staircase New Flat15





Rajesh, Rakesh and Anand (From LtoR) on gr. Flr of Staircase at N Flat 15



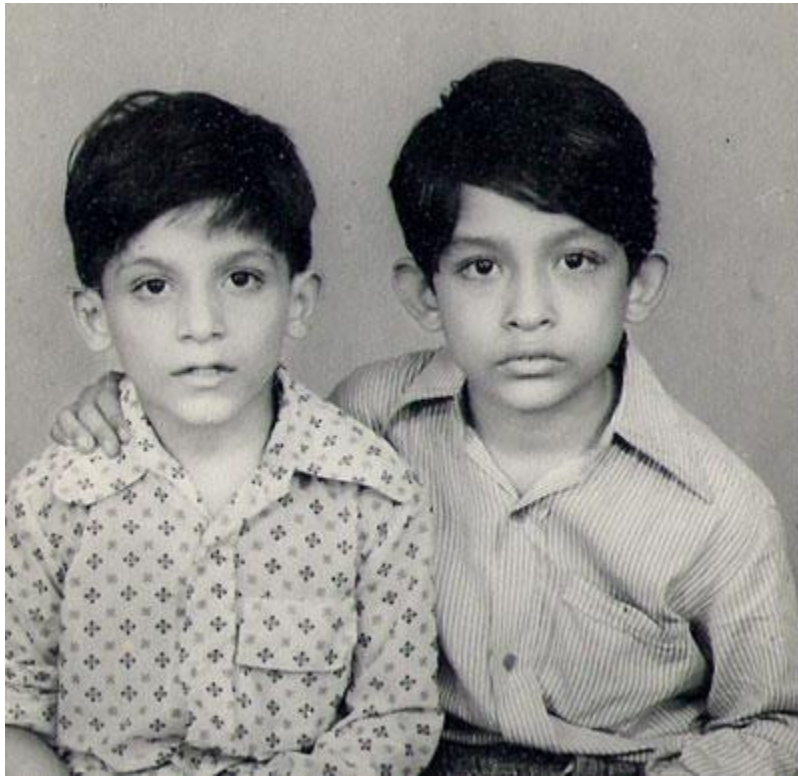
Trio with AJ Bhattacharya's son on road of New Flat



Rajesh, Rakesh and Anand in New Flat 15



Anand (Puchchu) with Rakesh in New Flat 15



Anand with Rajesh



Yamuna on a birthday with Lakshman Singh and Mrs Murty





Rajesh's Birthday party at New Flat with Anand at his left and  
Rakesh at back, Mrs. Lakshman Singh



Yamuna celebrating Anand's Birthday at HM Nursery School



Standing: Shiv Kumar Singh, Me and TSR Murthy, Sitting: Pratibha Singh, Yamuna and Mrs. Murthy  
Bottom: Rajesh Rakesh and Anand

## Volume II

### First Family Outing: Orissa Visit

I needed some outing badly. And for the first and perhaps the last time too, the family took a holiday for a week or so in Orissa around Durga Puja. We were going to Orissa by road for a week holiday. For a night, we had stayed with Braj Bhushan Pandey who was then professor in civil engineering and had visited us once in Trainees Hostel in Hind Motor. His wife was a great host. I went along with Pandey to meet Prof R. Misra. It became memorable for me. Prof. Misra had returned from some assignments outside of Kharagpur. I talked with Misra freely on various contemporary subjects as usual with my experiences of the industry. Mrs. Misra had also joined a little later. I asked Mrs. Mishra, a housewife all the years, “Don’t you feel the absence of your two sons?” Both of them had settled in USA. She replied, “How can I with thousands of my sons here all around.” After some month, I heard that Prof. Misra had a cardiac arrest in Pilani and died. I wrote a condolence letter to Mrs. Misra to which his sons had replied. Mrs. Misra got settled in Ranchi instead of going to live with his sons in US.

We had visited some Puja pandals also that night with Pandey. Next day we had left for Bhubaneswar in Orissa. The road was good but not four lane as it is now. I drove my car but had a driver Shri Das too to accompany and assist. I had helped Das in getting a job in HM. We stayed in a guest house in Bhubaneswar of Kalinga Group of Biju Patnaik. Mr. Mahapatra, one of my senior colleagues in HM and headed spare parts department for many years, had arranged that. His brother was a very senior executive in the group. The cook or caretaker of the guest house used to prepare the vegetarian food that we wanted. However, food preparation in every part of India has a distinct touch of difference in taste. We visited Nandan Kanan, the huge zoological park, the Buddhist caves of ancient India at Udaygiri and Khandgiri, and the famous old temples of Bhubaneswar. The encroachment had started. When I had visited Bhubaneswar with OP Khanna in late 1960s, the famous Raja Rani Temple was in a rice field. This time it was encircled by habitations of all sorts. Unfortunately, over the years, the department of archeology and heritage protection has failed to stop the exponentially increasing encroachment engulfing the places of historical importance. I get amazed and shocked to see them in encircled losing its beauty of natural ambience.



In Nandan Kanan near bhubaneswar





In front of an ancient cave, Khandgiri



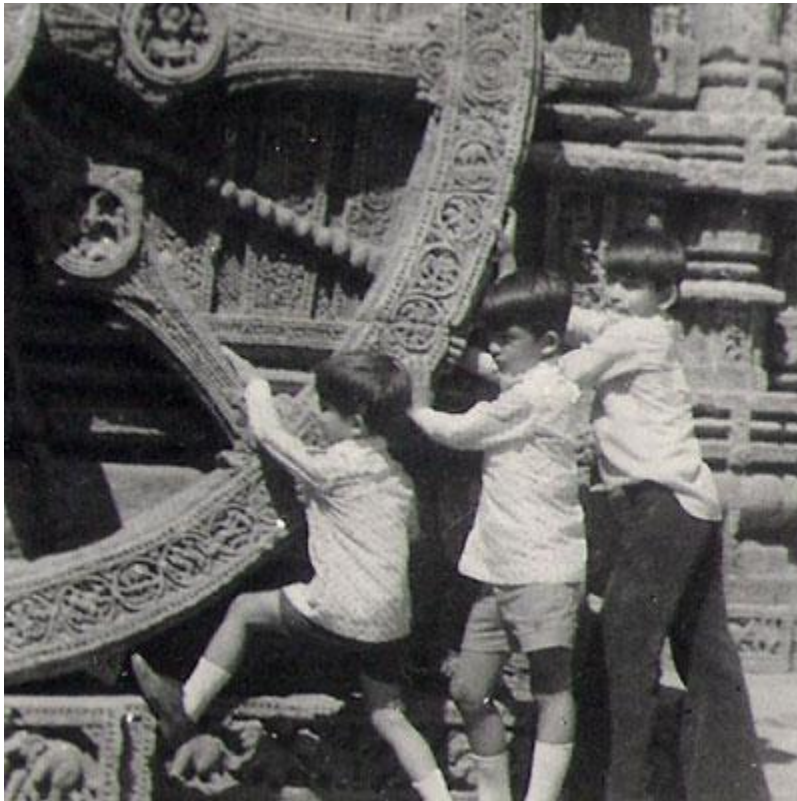
In the Lingraj Temple complex, Bhubaneswar

After Bhubaneswar, we drove for Puri. And on the way, we also saw Dhauli and then the famous Konark Sun Temple that just mesmerized me. I found similar encroachment here too. There are many anecdotes about the temple and the head artisan who built it. As per one, the king got the hands of the chief artisan chopped off so that he couldn't create such a temple again somewhere.

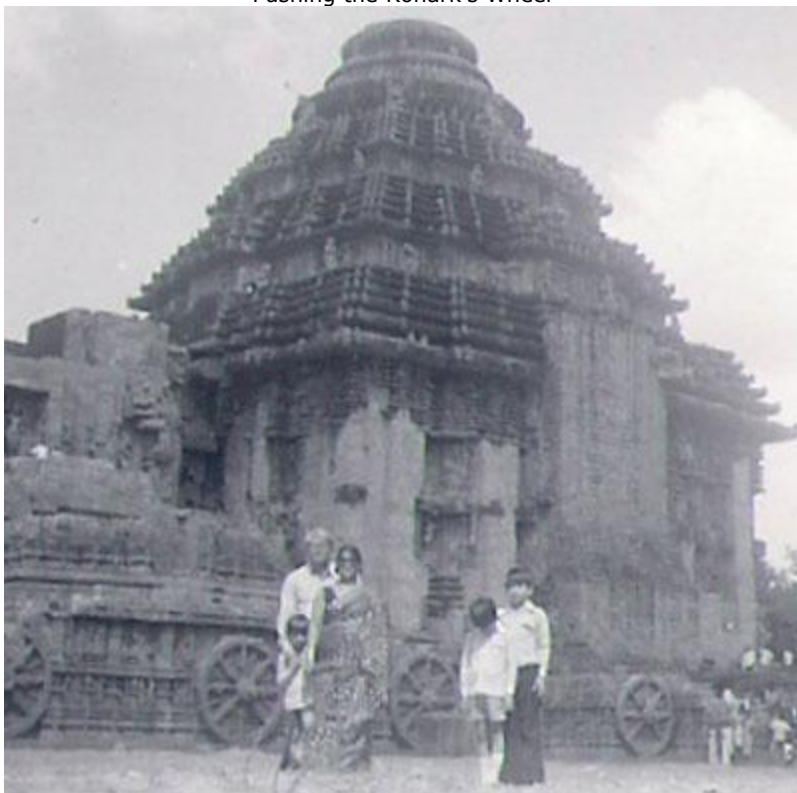


At Dhauli

The famous Kalinga war of Ashoka was fought somewhere near this place.



Pushing the Konark's Wheel



Konark Temple





At various places in Konark



With Rakesh near one unique piece of sculptures

Temples of Orissa, particularly of Konark are full with erotica images based on Kamashutra.

Mr. RC Rath had arranged the booking in the Panth Niwas on the Puri Beach and a priest to show us inside Jagannath temple. We all but also the children did really enjoy the trip. After reaching Panth Niwas, we got really a relief. We were bored with the food that we had been taking outside. We had brought a stove and some rice etc too in our car from Hind Motor. Khichadi prepared on the stove in Panth Niwas and its taste left an imprint on our mind for ever. Rajesh still remembers it till date. Both Mahapatra and Rath were from the elite family of Orissa.



On seashore of Puri overlooking Bay of Bengal

I had promised to Yamuna that we would go out every year once for a holiday, but I could never keep the promise and thus lost some great opportunities to enjoy a better quality of life.

### **Becoming Technical Head-Chief Production Engineer, Mechanical**

As usual the rumour mills of Hind Motor were agog about a major reshuffle in organization. I was expecting to be promoted to take over the whole of mechanical division as production manager, as I was the only who deserved it. I had put on an outstanding record as manager of Axle plant.

On January 7, 1976 there was a major organization change with a long circular of Mr. S. L. Bhattar, who had a designation of President by then in line of American organizations. Mr. GC Bansal got appointed as Executive Assistant to the President. Mr. RC Rath became Manufacturing Manager and so my boss. I was made Chief Production Engineer replacing Harpal Singh who was designated Production Manager. Mr. RD Nautyal was moved to Service department as deputy service manager reporting to Mr. BK Chaudhry.

Production Engineering was a totally technical responsibility. I didn't have any first-hand experience of production engineering. I had not learnt anything of the production engineering in IIT, as the specialization in the fourth year was offered in our days to top fifteen students based on the performance till third year of engineering. I had not gone to the department even during my executive training period. Many of my well-wishers in HM were of an opinion that this change was planned to prove me a failure. I was amazed, when Mr. Rath had called me some days ahead of the circular and told that I would be getting promotion no doubt but not as production manager-mechanical, but as Chief Production Engineer-mechanical. I was shocked

and had protested. But Rath had full support of Mr. SL Bhatler. I didn't find any wisdom in going and talking with Mr. Bhatler. Interestingly, it was also to embarrass Mr. HP Singh too. Pretty soon he left the organization to join TELCO (presently known as Tata Motors). In that change, Mr. NK Shukla had become Chief Engineer, the head of research and product development, though he was a metallurgist by qualification from BHU. For some time, Mr. Shukla was Vice President- manufacturing too, when I was 'Manufacturing Manager-mechanical'. Unfortunately, Mr. Shukla died in harness after another organization change when he was made responsible only for R&D though Mr. VK Bhatt was already the chief engineer. Hindustan Motors was a great playground of company politics.

I didn't go to the factory 3-4 days. Suddenly I got a flash of idea rather enlightenment; Let me consider all those technically experienced old employees of the department as fools for a moment, be their boss and test if the hard work can take care of my professional weakness.

I learnt the new job fast and started impressing the employees with my innovative approaches through a time bound targets. I worked more as manager. Even a tool design must take only a fixed time. A fixture or a jig must get manufactured in a fixed time frame. I started productivity approach to production engineering tasks. I also insisted on the designers of jigs and fixtures to go and see its manufacturing in tool room and its trial in production to appreciate the troubles faced in manufacturing and to design it error-free first time itself.

Hindustan Motors had undertaken a very important project of manufacturing a diesel engine for Ambassador Cars. R&D has designed the diesel engine out of the petrol engine already in use for Ambassadors. Mr. GC Bansal as Executive Assistant to the President was assisting one expatriate Mr. Aldridge who was brought in from Vauxhall Motors to head the operation of Hindustan Motors for some time. In the first meeting that I attended on the project as chief production engineer-mechanical, Mr. Bansal singled me out and expressed his apprehensions if I could get the task completed in time. It was a huge project that meant design, manufacture, and modification of hundreds of jig and fixtures and other tooling. I requested him to have some patience. I closely monitored the project right from the drawing board to the manufacturing in Tool Room. For the first and the last time in HM, tool room witnessed a mass production shop like activities. I got the huge assignment completed and tried out in about four months. I did also contribute in getting some of the engineering changes incorporated that eased the manufacturing of the components and avoided failures in fields. Interestingly, I had used only the existing machining lines and facilities. Hindustan Motors for the first time got even machine tools modified and rebuilt. It was a project with no capital expenditure that sustained Hindustan Motors for a long time when the demand of petrol cars had reduced. It gave a lot of confidence and according to many, my most important contribution to Hindustan Motors that I had considered my own company till that time.

I got my due after a lot of struggle. Mr. Bhatler on phone informed me that he had allotted a first floor big flat (Flat 4) that was on road side. In all the earlier years since 1963, I got to live in top floor, both in Trainees hostel as well as New Flat that were very uncomfortable in summer.



### **And Production Manager- Mechanical**

I hadn't been in the new position of Chief Production Engineer for even six months. I had got designed and manufactured most of the jigs and fixtures and completed the most of engineering tasks for producing diesel engines. I was enjoying the technical responsibility of the job. But pretty soon one day Mr. Bhattars asked me to take up the responsibility of the mechanical division as Production Manager. I requested Mr. Bhattar for allowing me to remain as Chief Production Engineer for at least another six months. He said, 'nothing doing, in next six hours, you take over the responsibility of production.' A circular of July 9, 1976 signed by Mr. SN Murarka, who was then designated as Plant Manager, made the change official. I was in production assignment again. Mr. HP Singh had left. Mr. SD Mathur replaced me as Chief Production Engineer-mechanical. He was earlier head of machine maintenance and had come from National Engineering Industries, Jaipur.



As Manufacturing Manager-Mechanical Division

I found many of the systems and the production capacities that I had established when I headed Engine and Axle plants, missing. I had to work hard again to bring back the work discipline. Here it will be pertinent to narrate an incident.

Mr. Bhattar had suggested me once to get shifted to the car assembly division that used to be the stepping stone to heading of the whole car manufacturing plant. I wanted him to give the charge along with mechanical division. Mechanical manufacturing and its technology was my passion those days. To him, it was perhaps a major change that he couldn't execute.

I went busy for some months to correct the maladies of the mechanical division and started putting in long hours. Mr. RC Rath continued as manufacturing manager and I had to report to him. Rath was a great politician coming from a famous politician's family of Orissa.

M/s Hindustan Motors was very poor in giving good salaries to its employees. Many a times, I felt, it followed criteria other than the individual's performance in giving increments and benefits such as company's car, better housing or promotions.

As Production Manager- Mechanical, I got exposed to a new manufacturing division of transmission that dealt with the assembly and testing of car and truck gearboxes and machining of all components going in it including gears. I learnt and contributed in streamlining the manufacturing and enhancing the production of gears to a record level. I could flood the spare part department. It made many gear manufacturers in India, who had the main business of producing gears for spare part market.

Interestingly, once I look back to the remunerations that I received from Hindustan Motors for the years I worked most, I get a shock. According to the company balance sheet that started providing the data on high paid employees, in the year ending on March 1975 as Area Manager of Axle Plant I received Rs 30,747 as total remuneration after 14 years of experience in Hindustan Motors. For the year 1976, when I was Chief Production Engineer- Mechanical Division, I got Rs 33,147, and for the year 1977 when I returned back as Production Manager of Mechanical Division I collected Rs 37, 884. Hindustan Motors never gave any special increment with any promotion to me. Every one up in the line appreciated my hard work time and again but it never got translated into monetary benefits to me. I was the youngest engineer to hold the positions with many older engineers working as subordinates, but salary wise I never got any special privilege. I suffered for the company politics of a typical family run private company.

On April 24, 1978, I was appointed as Assistant Manufacturing Manager- mechanical division. Both production engineering and tool room and tool control came under my responsibility with SD Mathur and DK Ramamurty, an old timer who had been my boss when I was in tool tryout as trainee, reporting to me. I got the responsibility of the machine maintenance department for the first time. I still remember how hundreds of machine tools were re-commissioned after a flood that had affected the plant.

Hindustan Motors was to start the manufacturing of Contessa cars that was an older version of Vauxhall Car with an idea of ultimately replacing Ambassadors. It had bought all its toolings, particularly stamping die-sets at throw away price. HM had decided to use the Ambassador power-units comprising of engine and transmission for the car. However, it required a new steering assembly. Mr. Rath on advice of Mr. SL Bhattar made me visit the steering manufacturer in UK to understand the details to facilitate in in-plant manufacturing. It was some sort of bonus foreign trip after the one in 1966. Mr. Bhattar agreed that I could take Yamuna with me in this trip. Yamuna went with me for the first time abroad. It was a tough decision as we were to leave back our sons and parents with just Syamal to manage the household. Rakesh was appearing for his school final in few months. But the whole family wanted us to go.

As Mr. Bhattar had agreed, it meant reduced cost for Yamuna's travel. We left Calcutta on October 33, 1982 via Bombay where we stayed at Hotel Sea Rock that night. I had been staying at Sea Rock on my official visits to Bombay. It had a rotating restaurant at the top. One could get a nice glimpse of Bombay from that height. I liked the view from the restaurant in that late night dinner that day, as the flight from Calcutta to Mumbai had reached very late and so did Yamuna.

During the transit at Rome Airport, I rushed and bought a Canon Autofocus for \$167. I was happy that I had bought a Japanese make, but later on I got surprised when I found it with a tag of 'Made in South Korea'. The Japanese had started getting its products manufactured in countries other than Japan too. China was still not in the picture.

We reached Orly Airport, Paris in day time on Saturday. I tried to find the address of the hotel booked by telling the information counter the name of the hotel. I was shocked when the girl there told me to give the address. I was not having that in my itinerary given by the travel agent. The girl said, "There are 20 or more of Hotel Residence. How can I tell the hotel you have booked?" I went to Air India counter. Fortunately the girl there could appreciate my problem. She started calling the hotels. Fortunately for me, the first Hotel Residence that she called was my hotel. Next few days we visited all the places of interest: Eiffel Tower, Louvre Museum and walked along **Seine** River. Paris was really beautiful with its large number of beautiful statues and great sculptures created by great artists of their time. Naturally, in the Museum we did see Monalisa-the world famous painting.













## London

Next day we flew from Charles de Gaulle airport, Paris and reached London. Here also Air India had booked us in a hotel in Russel Street. Mr. SL Bhatler with his family was in London. While I was on the way to meet him, he called me in hotel. Yamuna couldn't recognize his voice and replied that I had gone to meet Mr. Bhatler. Later on when we met at Selfridge in Oxford Street, he provided a number of tips for enjoying our visit of London. He was a different person in London. He was very free and friendly and gave touch of fatherly figure. We went around London and visited almost all the places of interest using London underground railway, 'Tube': Buckingham Palace, West Minister Abbey, Trafalgar Square, London Tower and many other places.

















On October 28, 1982, we travelled by British Rail from Euston to Birmingham. Jack Field of BSA White, a machine tool company, was at station to receive us. We went straight to visit the factory that in those days built multi-spindle turning machines. To our surprise, BSA White had arranged a wonderful vegetarian lunch, mainly of salads, for us at a restaurant overlooking a beautiful golf club complex. Yamuna even today remembers of that lunch. It had some egg pieces that were removed ultimately. Mr. Jack Field was a retired old person but really helpful. He could locate the house of one acquaintance of ours, Shri Dutta and then left us at St. John's Hotel.



Outside Hotel in Birmingham

Next day, Jack took me to Alfred Herbert and then dropped Yamuna to Dutta's residence. At Alfred Herbert that had a presence in India, I saw Kirloskar produced machine tools that they used to rework and market as 'Made in England'. That was a time when none in western world

was ready to buy anything 'Made in India'. Over the years all that has changed. The allergy for 'Made in India' is dead. Thereafter, I visited PGM, a plant where I saw the interesting manufacturing processes of gear shaving and honing cutters. After the lunch, I went to Cincinnati Milacron that had a huge plant in those days. However, there was hardly any activity. I had to take a taxi to return to St. John's Hotel. I kept waiting for Yamuna. I expected her to return in time. I was hungry and worried. I didn't have any contact numbers but that of Jack Field. The old man and his wife advised me to wait. Very late in the evening, Yamuna came with Dutta, his friend Bhopal Narayan Chaudhry and dragged me to Sarkar's house where they had arranged a family dinner party. Sarkar was the brother-in-law of Dutta. After the dinner they dropped us in hotel with a promise from me that I would stay with them for few days.

October 30 was Saturday. We checked out of the hotel and Sarkar took us for a lunch and then to Dutta's place. I insisted to visit Birmingham Motor Show. Dutta accompanied me. Yamuna preferred to stay back and market with Mrs. Sarkar. It was my first Motor Show and I was awestruck with the models of the automobile manufacturers from all over the world. It was very much informative too. I really enjoyed it. Dutta brought me to Bhopal's place where Yamuna was already there after shopping. Bhopal and his wife Dolly with their cute daughter Shubhra proved to be very good hosts, though we hardly knew them earlier.





At Motor Show Birmingham, 1982

Actually, one of Dutta's brothers was working in the tryout department of Hindustan Motors. He had communicated about my visit to his brother and requested to provide as much help as possible. Perhaps he did not know that Dutta was unemployed at that time. Dutta had two sweet daughters. For the first time I saw the immigrant Indians and their life in UK.

On October 31, Bhopal, Dolly and Shubhra saw us off at Birmingham railway station for London, but requested to come back after completing my business assignments and stay with them. After taking some items from our baggage from the cloak room of the London hotel, we reached Paddington station by taxi to board a train for Neath, that was small town near *Neath* Port Talbot in Wales, UK. Cam Gear factory was located there. It was a wonderful train journey in South Wales region of England. We reached Cimla Court, the place fixed up by Cam Gear for our stay pretty late in the evening. Cam Gear was one of the vendors for the Contessa steering systems that HM were to manufacture in-house in its factory.



Outside Cipla Court, Neath, South Wales

Next day an employee of Cam Gear came, took me to Cam Gear and introduced me to its managers looking after the development, manufacturing and industrial engineering. Mr. Whitney, Development Manager took me all around the manufacturing areas. Thereafter, I was left free to move around, observe the operations and put my queries or requirements to the Development Manager. I spent rest of the day studying the manufacturing of steering system that was integrated in Contessa Cars that Hindustan Motors was to produce. In night Mrs. and Mr. Whitney came and took us for a dinner in the best hotel of Swansea. The night drive that was almost through a valley along the sea was really exciting. Yamuna was happy. She was getting a royal reception for the first time. But the hotel premises with openly exhibited non-vegetarian raw meats, was shocking for her. Mrs. Whitney was a beautiful young lady who at home was engaged in knitting at home for orders from different sources. Next day I returned to Cimla Court by 3.30 PM from Cam Gear and went for shopping with Yamuna in Woolworth nearby, as I had only a day left. I concluded my visit to cam Gear on Wednesday October 3 after spending some time on shop floor to clear some of my doubts and a meeting with the Managing Director. Whitney came to help me in checking out and see us off at the railway station. As Cimla Court didn't accept travelers' cheques, I had to go to the bank. The train journey was very comfortable and we reached London, and stayed that night at Oxford Hotel, as Grand Hotel where we stayed earlier didn't have any accommodation. Tariff was Pound 34.50 per night.





Outside Cam Gear factory

Next day, we left for Luton by train from King's Cross station in London. I made two mistakes. First I bought a return ticket. But I was to be in Luton for a number of days. The return ticket was valid only for the day. I returned it in time. Second I took a passenger train and not the express so the train stopped at many station. Aldridge who was on station to receive us was getting worried. After retirement from Vauxhall Motors, Aldridge was in Hindustan Motors as its top executive for some time. I knew him as Chief Production Engineer when I was looking after the introduction of diesel engine for Ambassador Cars. I would never have thought of Aldridge receiving me. Aldridge first took us to Hotel Strathmore, but as the tariff was pound 44 per night, he decided in favour of Hotel Red Lions that was 8 pounds less. I left Yamuna in Hotel and went to Vauxhall Motors where I had to collect information about the mechanical components, particularly suspensions and steering systems for the Contessa cars that was based on Vauxhall's Victor model and Hindustan Motors were launching. Aldridge introduced me to Mr. D. Gilles who took me around and then dropped in the hotel where Yamuna was anxiously waiting.

I was visiting Luton, for that matter England, after 16 years. I had some sweet nostalgic memories of the place. I found Luton Plant of Vauxhall totally desolate and different. It had cut down its car manufacturing capacity and the manpower. Vauxhall Motors that had one time 30,000 persons working for it had hardly 12,000. But more than that there was gloom on the faces of every employee. England's automobile manufacturing was on sharp decline. Most of the famous ones had become part of history. Vauxhall was manufacturing only one popular model of car for European market for General Motors. My main mission this time was to locate the toolings and its detail drawings that Vauxhall had missed. All those were just scrap for Vauxhall but would have eased the process of HM's manufacturing of Contessa.

On the week end, Aldridge picked us from the hotel and took us for a dinner at his residence, where Mrs. Aldridge was waiting. Mr. Aldridge time and again requested me for a drink, but I preferred soft drink only. We spent some quality time with them as they kept on talking about their memorable stories of the days in Hindustan Motors, and its executives. I envied their way

of living lavish retired life and wondered how we would do that. I had a plan to rest for the Saturday and Sunday in hotel itself and visit Luton Hoo, a museum that I had visited in 1966. I was having severe headache too. On next morning, after taking breakfast and while roaming in the shopping arcade that was just the next door, we decided to go to London and visit many places that we liked again. We took express bus to London. After all, I was only 43 then. Perhaps we were making the UK trip a late honeymoon's outing. We roamed; we shopped and stayed at Bedford Hotel that night. Yamuna loved Selfridge, M&S, and the sari shops to add to her wardrobe. I always liked wandering around Hyde Park and Buckingham Palace in London. But I also took Yamuna to Madam Tussad's Wax Museum, Tower of London and its Kohineer and Tower Bridge, and returned to our hotel in Luton in night.



Yamuna in Madam Tussad Museum, London



Yamuna near Tower Bridge, London

On Monday when I reached Vauxhall Motors, I could witness a strike, found the striking workmen picketing, but they didn't obstruct me from going in. I was carrying a bagful of technical literature collected at Motor Show in Birmingham. I fixed up a visit to Sigma, an electronic inspection equipment manufacturing company. Mr. Peckzasky of Sigma picked me up for the plant visit and dropped me back at the hotel. I was worried about Yamuna and cell phones were not there in those days.

Yamuna was alone in the hotel in Luton. While watching the news, she came to know of the strike in Vauxhall and got panicky.

On return after the work, we used to move around and go for the dinner in some Indian restaurants that were mostly run by Bangladeshi. We had an exhilarating experience that day. We entered a restaurant, 'Gate of India'. There was none in that at that moment. When one young man came to attend us, Yamuna took initiative and said in Bengali, 'if you can't offer fresh rice, please tell us. We shall go some different place'.

'Didi, just wait and let me serve you', was his soft reply.

Thereafter, it was he who selected what we would eat. He kept on serving. I was worried about the bill. After finishing the best dinner till date, I asked for the bill. He politely refused to take any money, rather did also offer to feel frank and to take any amount in loan to enjoy the European trip. It was really a great gesture that overwhelmed. Why do we talk of the differences between the communities?

On November 10, 1982, I completed the official work at Vauxhall Motors. As per previous made arrangement Bob Jelly of Ryder picked me from the factory office itself to take me to Ryder's Derby Plant. I got cashed my travellers' cheques in the bank on the way, paid the hotel bills and checked out. Yamuna was ready. Halfway on the motorway, we had our lunch at a restaurant. Bob Jelly requested me to have his photograph with Yamuna.



Bob Jelly with Yamuna near Motorway restaurant

After the plant visit, Bob dropped us at the residence of Bhopal Narayan in Birmingham.

My official visit to UK had ended but I spent some days with Bhopal and other acquaintances as I had promised them. Choudhrys were great hosts. Their daughter Shubhra became our darling. They visited us thereafter too in Hindustan Motors. Shubhra became dear to the whole family. Duttas, Sarkars, Ahmads were immigrants from the subcontinent and had come to make living in UK. Their children were growing in different cultures. But they were much Indians at root. They were not rich but very warm at heart and helpful. They treated us as one of their family members or closest relatives rather a little more than that. The women folks treated Yamuna as their elder sister, helped in her shopping and did everything for her convenience. And all this was against a serious odd that we were strict vegetarian. They did also loaned money. Yamuna kept on buying cardigans, sarees, electrical appliances and finally insisted for the colour TV.





With Bhupals in Birmingham



Yamuna with Mrs. Sarkar, Mrs Dolly N. Chaudhry and Mrs. Dutta



Me with Bhupal Narayan, Sarkar, and Dutta

During my stay with Bhopal, on the first day I visited Jaguar, the high-end car manufacturing company in Coventry that has now been acquired by Tata Motors. In those days, Jaguars were basically handcrafted and so costly. On shop floor I found posters for quality in all the corners. As I was told, rich Americans were its customers. Dutta arranged and accompanied me.



In Jaguar Plant in Coventry

And on the next day, I also went to an old machine tools manufacturing company, Pollard that was owned by a family. I had a long discussion with Managing director, Mr. R Pollard a bulky old man. While other machine tools factories were on decline, his order book was full and was still exporting to Europe. He had sent his nephew to pick me up from Bhopal's residence to the plant that in Leicester and took almost an hour and a half. I loved these plant visits and technical discussions throughout my professional career. I kept on trying to see, know and learn everything possible from all and every sources.

Bhopal wished if I could immigrate. He got opened an account in Barclays. But I never tried rather dared to get a job abroad seriously. I had my growing kids and ailing parents to care.

On the Sunday before we departed for London, one Bangladeshi friend of Bhopal, Ahmad arranged a visit to Stratford-on-Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare. It was drizzling that all day but we with Bhopals really enjoyed the trip. The whole township has been dedicated to the great literary personality. Everything has been so carefully preserved. And that had been the real difference of a developed nation. Whenever I visit such places I always leave it with a wish to return again. But it hardly happens.



Yamuna with Dolly Chaudhry and Shubhra inside one of the rooms at Stratford-on-Avon

I had overstayed. I got a message from Mr. Bhatler through Mr. Aldridge to return. It was getting pretty cold too. I abandoned the idea of visiting some more places in Europe while returning. Finally we left Birmingham on Monday, November 15 with Panasonic colour TV in our baggage. Bhopal had paid for it and Ahmad had arranged a taxi too for us to reach London conveniently. I had to pay only 25 pound for it.

I could get my return flight to India confirmed for next Thursday. Air India had to endorse it to BA flight. We shopped, we covered rather went around the places of interest in London again and again. I also went once to Luton again to collect a suitcase of Mr. Bhatler and drawings. We had exceeded the weight of baggage that we could carry. I sent a suitcase through post office as unaccompanied baggage. I had to take a taxi to airport because of the TV in our baggage that cost us 17 pounds. But still we had to pay about 30 British pounds and to wait for almost a whole day at Heathrow airport because my mistake. The BA flight had a short stop over at Doha. But we were not allowed to go out of the plane.

On November 19, 1982, we landed at Dumdum with huge lot of gifts for kids and a colour TV. India was organizing Asiad. It had provided certain custom-duty concession on colour TV. However, I had to cough up Rs 6870 as custom duty. News viewing became more enjoyable. But private channels and soaps were still to come. Children were happy with TV. My parents were happy to find us with them. They had missed us the most.



Manufacturing Manager-Mechanical

I got promoted as Manufacturing Manager-Mechanical Division and continued working with different plant managers SN Murarka, JN Rungta and then NK Shukla.



## **Big Flat 4- Our Important Abode in HM**



Big Flat 4, the residence upto 1996 in Hind Motor



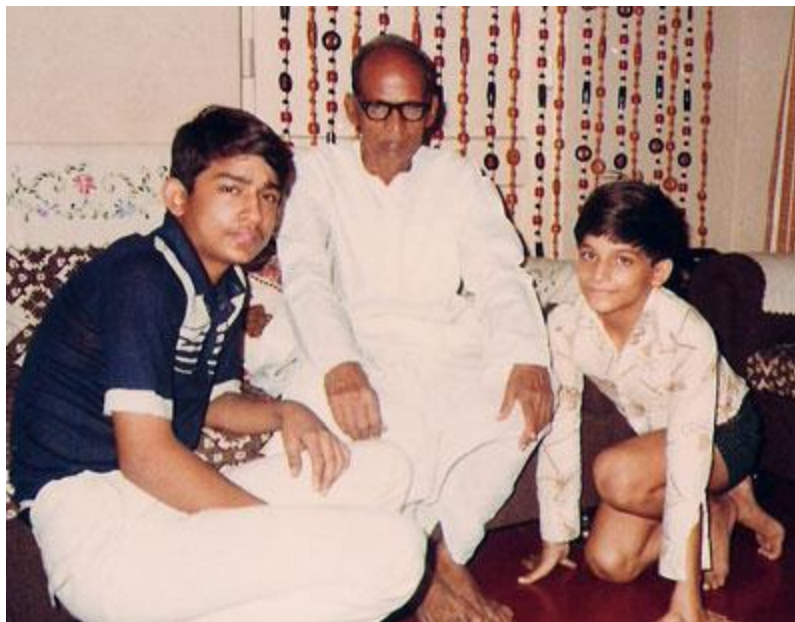
I hardly did anything for the education of my sons. Yamuna looked after the task very well. All the three started in the Nursery School of Hind Motor. Thereafter, we got them admitted to Hartley's High School, Calcutta. For Rakesh, we attempted few times a change to better school such as St. Xavier's, and St Lawrence, but failed. Perhaps, I was not able to find out the right middle man who could get it done. I did certainly not know anyone in political field. Rakesh had also attempted to get into RK Mission, Baidyanath Dham. Whenever Yamuna raised the question, I consoled her. A school doesn't matter, my sons will do great from Hartley's itself. It's Yamuna who engaged tutors. Some were good, but not dedicated as I expected.







I didn't have the patience required in a tutor and also the time for coaching the kids. Even though I tried once or twice, but I proved to be miserable. I remember at least coaching Rakesh for some time. But I do also remember my losing temper at him if he didn't follow. We engaged Ranjee Rai, an employee of HM who was professional home tutor too. Very soon, Rakesh developed the interest and started working very hard. He soon came up to the top rank in his class in Hartley's. In senior classes, Pandey, a senior teacher of HM High School came as his tutor. He knew the subject, particularly mathematics. But I had respect for him for different reasons. He was a widower but then too had brought up his children very well. All of them were well-educated and well-placed. He did also remind me of my grandfather.



Rajesh and Anand with their teacher Shri Tiwari



Rajesh and Anand got Shri Tiwari who was again a teacher in Hind Motor High School. They respected him. He was at one time considered the most feared teacher. All these tutors had become part of the family. They certainly inculcated some good values to the trio. I feel today really obliged for their immense contributions. Trio also respected their teachers.

Rakesh had appeared for the school final examination in 1983. He came out with flying colours. But the admission for Higher Secondary in a good institute was again a hard nut to crack. I wanted him to get admitted in RK Mission, Narendrapur or St. Xavier's. He appeared for its entrance tests. But I was not sure. To be on safe side, he got admission in Scottish church College too. Those were the torturous days. I was mentally miserable with no one to help. The company where I worked would have provided some help. But I couldn't even dream of that. But finally Prof. B N Sinha became my savior for getting Rakesh admitted in RK Mission College, Narendrapur. Fortunately for Rakesh, I was so placed in my company that I with Yamuna could visit him quite often. I liked the ambience of the institute.



With Prof. BN Sinha of RK Mission College, Narendrapur and his daughter

I had to bring my father from Bodarhi for treatment to Hind Motor and to live with us. He had spoiled his lungs because of his life style and habit of smoking. That was the time when all the three sons were growing and moving towards higher classes requiring separate space that was short. I had a responsibility of guiding the career of my cousin brothers, Ashok and Nirmal after their formal education in Varanasi University.

I got Nirmal a job in Hindustan Motors as a management trainee through Mr. SL Bhattar. Unfortunately, Nirmal decided to leave it and join a rural private college against my wishes. It was really very bitter to me. Ashok with his wife after his marriage remained with us for few months. I couldn't help him to get a job in HM, as I was hesitant to talk any more with Mr. Bhattar. However, Ashok got a job in Railways and is today very well off.

Most from the family visited us sometime or the other and lived with us.



The Whole Family with trio, Ashok and Sabya



Rajesh and Anand with Nand Kishore Chacha

The presence of my father and mother gave a great happy moment many a times. Yamuna was great at celebrating birthdays of kids who were growing. Her immense interests in experimenting with varieties of food preparations made the life enjoyable too.



Trio at Dining Table with Yamuna and Syamal



Anand with 'Dada Nati' and Mr. N Rajratnam





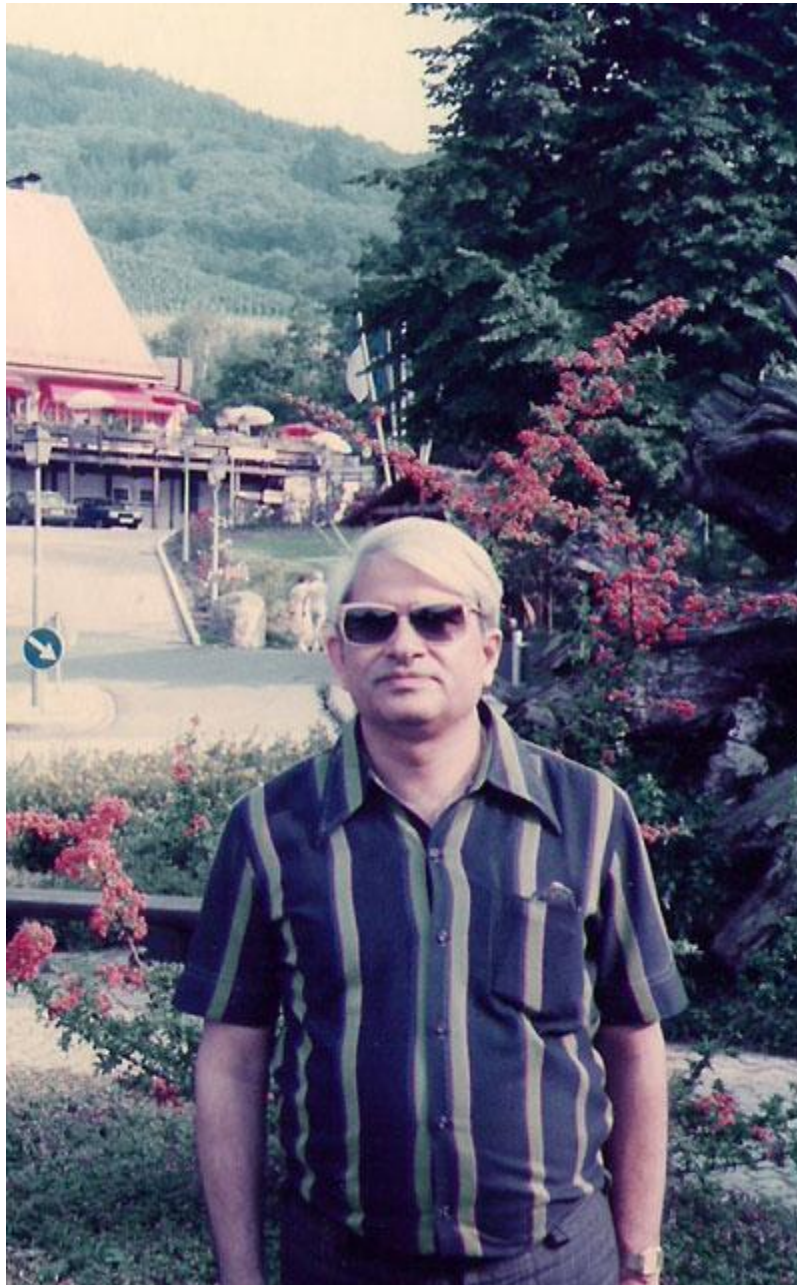
Rajesh and Anand with their Dadi

Biggest assembly of family members and relatives was for the function after death of my mother in Hind Motor.



Group Photograph after Shradh Ceremony of Mai





In Black Forest, Germany





Anad in one birthday at Big Flat 4

In all the three photographs above, the favourite shirt is common. It was everywhere from Goa, Pipra or Black Forest in Germany. One can see it in other places too. The trio always took away the best of my shirts, when they grew to use my size. There was one pullover too that I had brought from UK for a British Pound. It was the favourite of everyone in the family for a long time.

I have been lucky to maintain good relationships with at least some of my friends and persons whom I got acquainted during my career in spite of the absence of digital social network in those days. Many such as Sandip Mehta, BB Pandey, OP Khanna, GL Makhija, Kailash Narayan



Singh from IIT days visited me at my place. With many others of Hindustan Motors period I still sometimes keep on talking.



Sandip Mehta and Yamuna



From left Jailall Sharma and hus wife with us





From Left OP Khanna and his wife Prabha with Yamuna in Salt Lake



Makhija with family at Flat 4 hind Motor

### **Other Activities of Interest**

Over the Years, I got transferred to different departments of Hindustan Motors, an automobile manufacturing company, requiring the knowledge of totally different technologies. I devoted a lot of time in learning the technology involved and in in keepmg updated. I came to know of some finer aspects of management by attending conferences. I parted with my experiences by lecturing in some.

I kept on writing articles based on my experiences and getting them published in various magazines and journals. It covered subjects such as production engineering, supervisory management, quality improvement and cost reduction. I got some remuneration too for writing the article. In 60s, the Engineering Association of India (presently called CII) paid Rs 50 for the

articles published in 'Engineering News of India', when my salary was below Rs 1000 a month. On November 20, 93, I received a cheque of Rs 300 for my article, 'Manufacturing Trends for Crankshafts' in '*Indian Machinist & Flexible Manufacturing*'. But I never got those articles published for money. It used to give me some happiness and a feeling of achievement while I would experience everything going wrong and against me in Hindustan Motors.

For my own pleasure I occasionally penned poems since my school days. Many are lying in my diaries. I never tried to publish them. I now sometimes enter them in my blog.

Besides having our own social contacts in neighbourhood and with those who came closer to us during the time, we also participated in some societies of Uttarpara and during the course we met some great artists of the time.



L: Feroza Begum, Bangladesh singer, R- Mamata Shankar, the well known dancer and actress from calcutta



L- With family of Kamakhya Singh R- With Mrs. and Prof. Jaswant Singh

Yamuna kept on getting more and more social, joined kitty parties, women's club, and finally Inner Circle of Rotary Club also, when I had become a member of Rotary Club of Serampore. She would have hardly missed any movie in auditorium. We tried to enjoy our small social circles by organizing the birthdays of the kids with family friends. Kamakhya Singh, Lakshman Singh, Shiv Kumar Singh and their family became almost part of our extended family. Mrs. Suresh Pandey and members of her family became part of all religious functions such as Chhath.



Yamuna with her friends in Chhutt Puja in Hind Motor





Yamuna outside Hind Motor Temple



Yamuna in a baubhat in Uttarpara



Yamuna with KP Rao for a prize giving ceremony





Yamuna in a party





T and B: Yamuna in Colony Temple with many senior executives and their wives



Yamuna in an Inner wheel Meeting







Yamuna at various Rotary Club functions



It was creditable that HM had a cosmopolitan atmosphere though in West Bengal. We had friends from all corners of the country. It helped our children to be broadminded. My sons for many years never knew of their caste. They like and love West Bengal more than Bihar.



Rathores and Murty in Flat 4





On a General Election Day

## My Lifestyle

Every evening after I returned from factory, I used to take Yamuna and go for a long stroll on the internal roads in residential area going up to the beautiful temple. Mostly I would put on dhoti and kurta. My living at home was very rustic. I would remain bare bodied. I hardly cared about the cleanliness and housekeeping of the house on which Yamuna spent her quality time.





Some odd moments captured, Bottom one in Fortworth, USA

As I remained madly worried at the workplace, I couldn't find much time for the children. I appeared to be a hard and rough. Fortunately I kept my softness reserved for the appropriate time. I was liberal with whatever they did.



In a typical hair style

I hardly bothered about my dresses and getup. For quite some time, I kept long hairs. I loved friends calling me Sumitranandan Pant, the famous Hindi poet. Once Mr. SL Bhattar called me in his office and asked me to get my hairs trimmed. Mr. BM Birla was visiting the plant.

I had for sometime a liking for loudly printed shirts. I never had big wardrobes. When I started going abroad, everyone thought my clothes as imported ones, though they were all from the shops across the railway line in hind Motors.

### **Professional Meets**

I attended a large number of professional conferences representing Hindustan Motors. Many professional bodies invited me to speak too. Jamshedpur became the nearest destination to share my knowledge with the professionals. Between TISCO and TELCO of my times, the management conferences on various industry related subjects were quite frequent. Some who knew me used to invite. I was also a member of The Rotary Club of Serampore for few years. I tried to use all media to express my views and get a name industry. I remember recording a talk on All India Radio, Calcutta station on October 29, 1983 for its mazdoor mandali programme that was relayed on November 1, 1983 at 5.30 PM. The talk was on the role of labour in improving productivity. One of my sons recorded the talk and they named it Sharma-Verma talk,

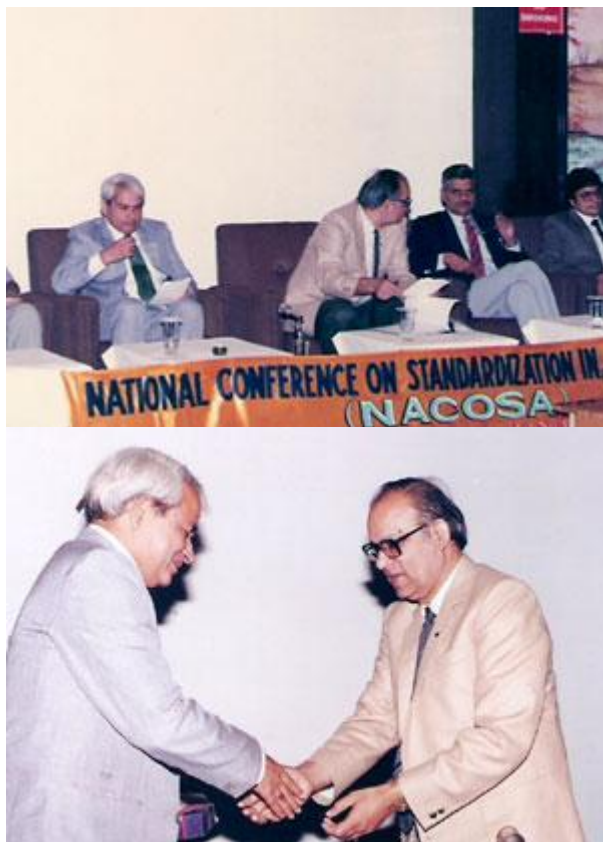
as while addressing Shri Verma who was a Personnel Manager of a Culcutta factory he addressed me by Sharmaji and I kept on calling him as Vermaji.



Left: At an HM Management Development Conference Right: Speaking to members of Indian Foundryman's Association







With Mr. Banka of TELCO at NACOSA, Jamshedpur 1991



In a Conference in Jamshedpur



A CII Conference on Auto Sector in Delhi

## Social Functions

I had developed many interests. I loved folk songs of Bhojpuri and patronized an association. One night a close associate came with a group of singers to entertain me in late evening. I had to take them in and close all the doors and requested them to sing in low pitch. Some who knew that I write poetry myself, took me to the family get together of poets for reciting my poem. I was regularly invited to preside over the Vidyapati functions and other odd one, such one in a competition of recitation of Gita slokas.



Top and left: At social functions in Uttarpara Bottom Right: In a meeting of Rotary Club





At Hind Motor School with Headmaster



**Trio Grew and Left for US**



Enjoying Tintin



After playing holi in New Flat



Family in New Flat 15

Yamuna kept herself busy in providing the best that was possible within our means for the trio. She would be busy in searching good designs and making

colourful sweaters. She would even dress them in the attires for girls. I don't think we did provide many toys to our kids. It was perhaps because of our priority and its affordability. I hardly visited Calcutta ever for shopping.



Family with sweaters Galore woven by Yamuna

I had moved to Big Flat 4. It was certainly big in floor area, but poorly designed. As I understood from my seniors, the flats were built for foreigners who came initially in Hindustan Motors, mainly from UK. The management of the time never believed in engaging any architect.

The trio became active and visible in the neighbourhood with their participations in various games, celebrations such as Sarshwati Puja, fancy dresses and dramas.

Rakesh was very hard working and focused in his studies right from school days. He had other interests too. He was good in singing. Yamuna had arranged Samar Paul to teach the trio painting. Rakesh was pretty good at that. In ordinary clay, he had created some busts of my grandfather and even mine besides those of Rabindranath and Gandhiji. Some are still there in at Noida residence. He was good in writing and painting. He wrote and published letters in 'The Statesman, Calcutta' in his school days itself. Some of his old papers include his attempt to create a cartoon book on line of what he read those days. All these are in our collections. Rakesh participated in fancy dresses, and dramas in HM itself. Rakesh kept on participating in dramas even in IIT, Kharagpur.





As a priest in a fancy dress show



Rakesh in a drama scene

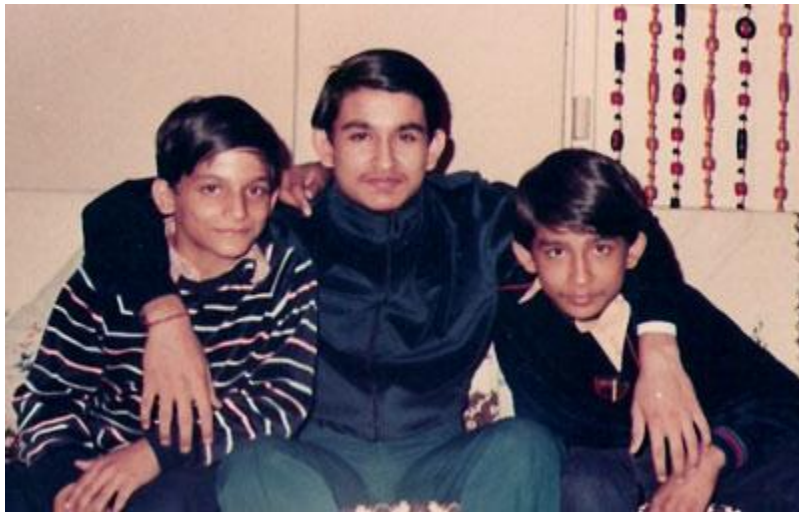




Another dram scene with Rakesh



With Rakesh's friends who appeared in School Final in 1983









Pucchu being hugged by Rakesh(L) and Rajesh



Rakesh earned a name for himself pretty soon in RK Mission College, Narendrapur. He became popular among his friends and was liked by the teachers and the principal. His performance would have certainly helped Rajesh to get in that institute.





With Rakesh outside RK Mission College, Narendrapur



With friends of RK Mission College



Rakesh as NCC Cadet with Rajesh, RK Mission College, Narendrapur

Rakesh prepared and appeared for the IIT-JEE from Narendrapur itself. He used the postal coaching that was popular in his days.



Anand and Rajesh with Rakesh at RK Mission, Narendrapur



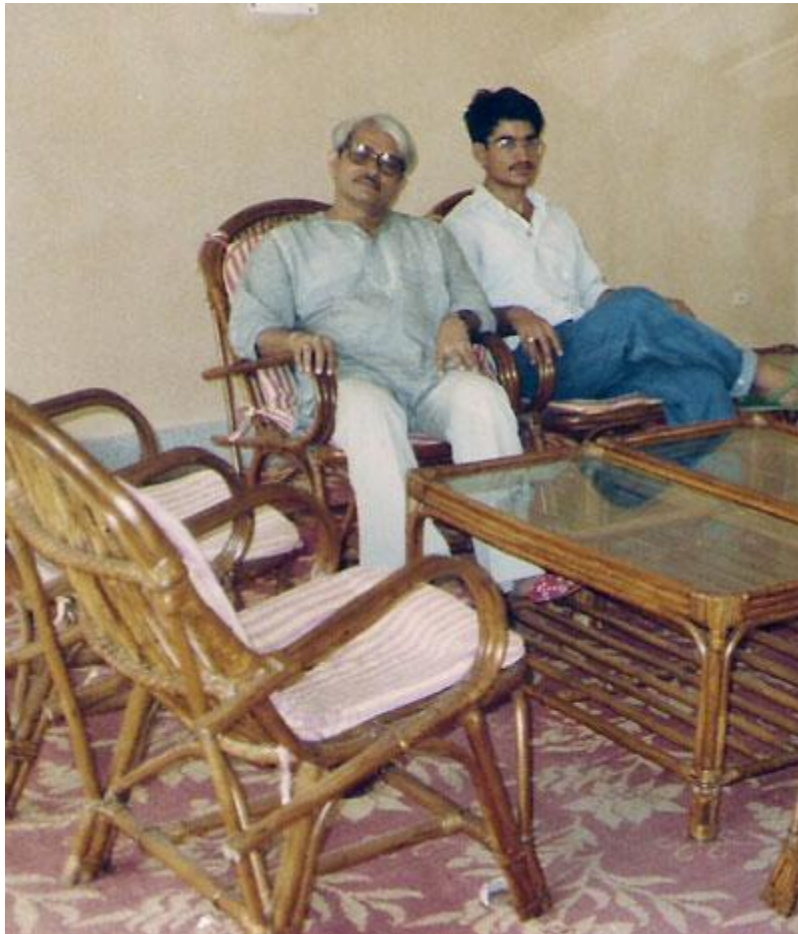
Yamuna with Rakesh in Narendrapur



In IIT, Kharagpur On the day of counseling of Rakesh, 1985

Rakesh's hyperactive involvement from writing to dramas, debates and sports continued in IIT days made me spend many worried nights. Rakesh fell sick and I had to go and bring him to Hind Motor for treatment. Those were the nightmarish days and nights. Yamuna had gone to village. I went to many doctors. I slept with Rakesh and cared him with patience. His absence for those days from IIT disrupted his studies. I provided moral support by taking Chitnis, one of my engineers in corporate office to help him in preparing for examination.





In the guest house of IIT, Kharagpur



Rakesh with Chitnish at Guest House of IIT



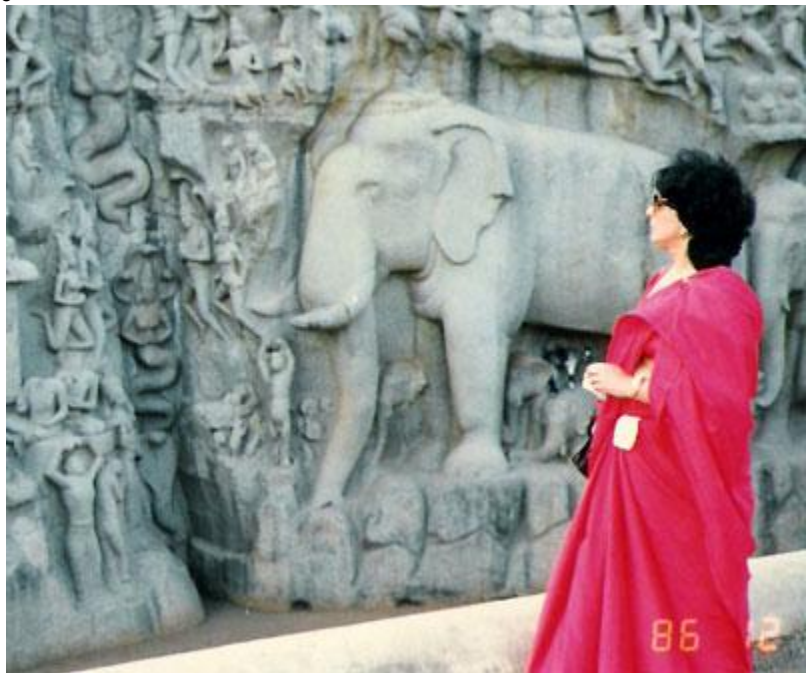
Rakesh with Rajesh, Anand and Devjyoti



A shared birthday-Rakesh and Mona



Seashore Temple at Mahabalipuram. 1986



And the carvings in Mahabalipuram

His absence and lower grades in some subjects made him disqualified from a gold medal. However, he was the topper of manufacturing science group,

but more importantly an all-rounder from Nehru Hall. I kept visiting IIT, Kharagpur till he remained there.

Once when I was in Chennai for factory work, Rakesh and Yamuna travelled by train and joined me. We went to Tirupati in car arranged by my friend. Rakesh and Yamuna went to Bangalore by a flight, lived with OP Khanna and visited Mysore and Srirangapatnam too. I wanted to familiarize Rakesh with the experience of travelling by air before he would visit US.

In last year of his stay at IIT, Kharagpur, I started exploring the ways to get him admitted in one of the top universities of USA. I wanted to get my dreams realized through him. And finally, he could make to Purdue University in Industrial Engineering department with full assistantship.

Rajesh tried to follow what Rakesh did. But he was better in games, particularly cricket and later on in basketball. The credit must go to Yamuna as she provided them whatever they wished. I would never know many things.

I do only remember that I emphasized a little more on the discipline for them, and sometimes punished them even without sufficient investigation.





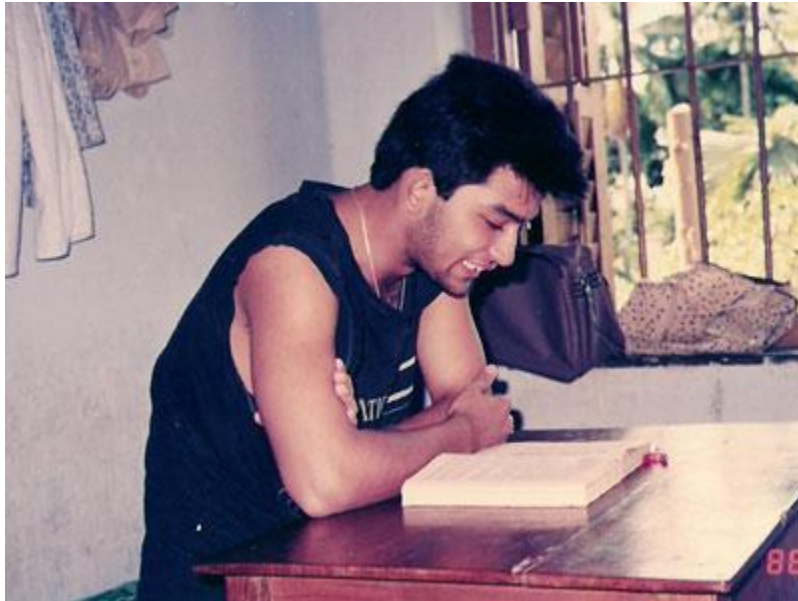
With Rajesh

Rajesh was different. He was less focused in learning for the examination, but very sharp and intelligent. His outcome if compared to his input was pretty high. I don't do why he went on feet to Tarkeshwar with Ganga water from Sheorafuli, some 30 km distance before his school final examination. He did also visit Tirupati on his own. We were worried. Unfortunately, cell phones were not available in those days. He had shaved his head. He had lost all the money that he carried and went empty stomach.



Left: Rajesh before taking Tarakeshwar Padyatra with kawarn Right: After Tirupati Yatra with Yamunas

Rajesh couldn't perform that well in Higher Secondary from RK Mission College, Narendrapur. I was shocked but perhaps I deserve some blame for Rajesh's failure too. I failed in monitoring his activities and performance in time. It was too late when we knew that he was in company of some bad friends. Rajesh lost one year in getting admitted into Mechanical engineering in BIT, Mesra.



Rajesh in BIT, Mesra



Grown up Rajesh



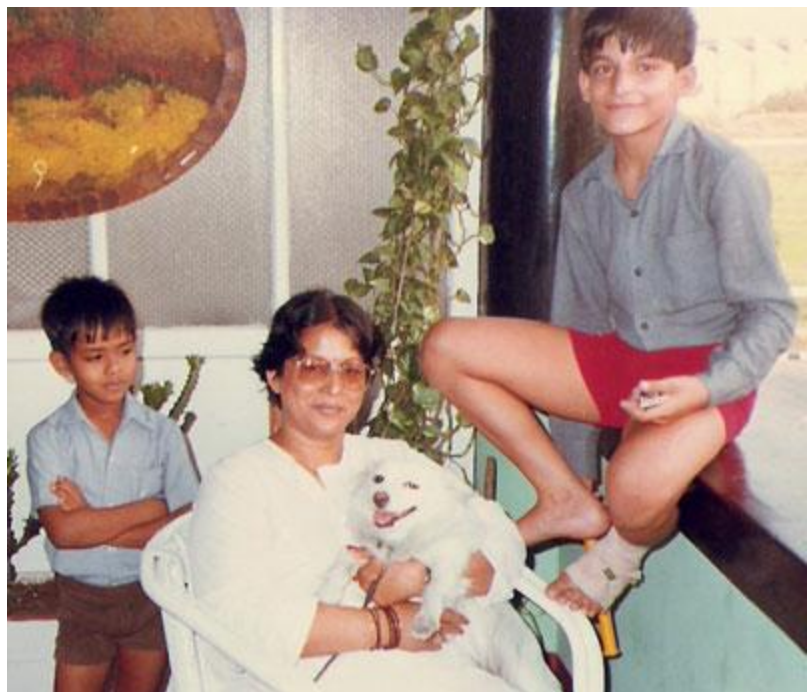
Rajesh with Girija at her residence in Ranchi

Rajesh was unique in one respect. He hardly bought any book or asked for anything else, while studying in BIT, Mesra. He would not take even a good pen when I offered. Rajesh was interested in western music. I remember I had once brought a cassette of Michael Jackson from one of my Japan trips that he wished. Rajesh had once broken his leg in BIT days. His friends brought him to Hind Motor. Yamuna was again away in village. I with Syamal nursed him. Rajesh was very extrovert and could network well. Mr. RD Nautyal, who was in our own building and service manager in HM, used him as model for a video made during the launching of HM's Contessa car.





On a fine morning with Anand



Injured Anand with Soumitra in Balcony of Flat4

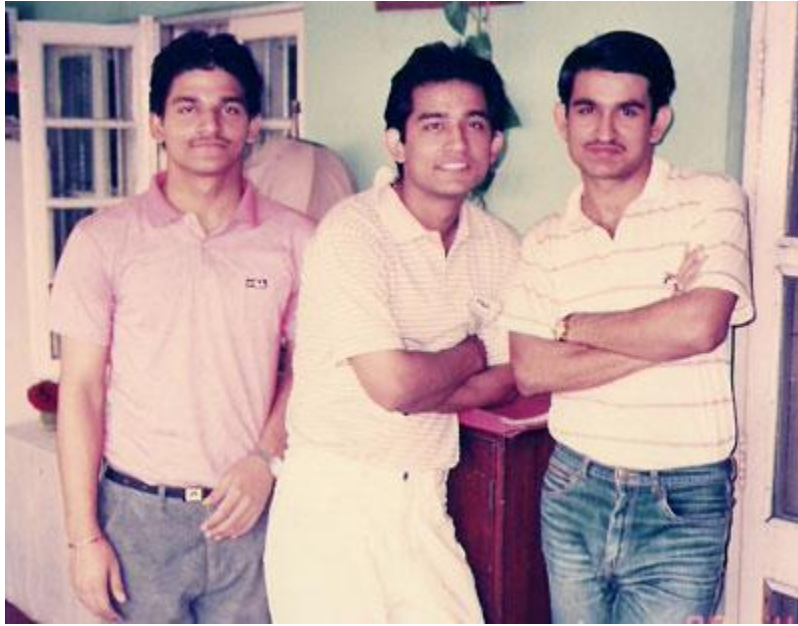
Anand was very naughty and in process he used to hurt himself very seriously many a times. It surprised even the staffs at HM dispensary. Rajesh was more aggressive and rash. He once reversed my car in speed in the nearby playground and hit the goal post damaging it seriously.



I was told about their pillow fights before going to bed in night. And recently Rajesh told me about some serious fights too in which he had major injury too. They were pretty friendly otherwise and supported each other. I remember one incident. Anand was appearing for School Final. I was having a little lighter assignment at that time. I thought of guiding him. I gave a test paper and asked him to complete the same in the required time frame. That was the way I used to practice in my days. Anand didn't perform well and I got annoyed. There was another reason of my annoyance. I had seen him collecting books of history from all sources and preparing the best answers. To me it appeared to be a waste of time when the examination was so near. Rakesh and Rajesh approached me in evening and requested me to let Anand do what he was doing and stop taking tests.

Anand was very good in mathematics in his school days. Unfortunately, he was unlucky too. My mother, with whom she was very much attached, died when he was preparing for his school final. His score was not as good as we expected. I felt very bad. Rajesh also was not performing as expected in RK Mission College, Narendrapur. Even today I feel guilty for not visiting very often to RK Mission College, Narendrapur during the period Rajesh was studying there. Perhaps that was the reason for the poor performance of Rajesh.





Grown up Trio



Family at Flat 4

Perhaps all that might have been be the reason that I didn't try my typical all out approaches to get Anand admitted in a real good college for his higher secondary education. Anand went himself and got admitted in a little known school across river Hooghly near Howrah Railway station, named Shankar Vidyalaya. In the same way I still repent that I didn't do my best for Anand for his higher secondary schooling. Anand travelled to Shankar

Vidyalaya daily for two years taking the public transport of local train and bus. Many a times, he never even troubled Syamal to prepare his breakfast in early morning before going to the school.

Anand prepared with some friends in the Hind Motor colony for the IIT-JEE. Based on the opinions of those friends, we were sure that he would make it. While all those friends who studied with him made it, Anand couldn't. We again got the shock, but fortunately he qualified in the West Bengal JEE. Anand could have easily got into Jadavpur Engineering College, but we decided against keeping him in the state, and opted for Kurukshetra Regional Engineering College in Haryana.

And in the days of Anand in Regional Engineering College, Kurukshetra, I visited him once when I was to go to see a factory that manufactured sheet metal stamping presses in Yamuna Nagar, Haryana. I took a lot of liberty for Anand with my onetime boss Mr. RD Nautyal who was heading then the service department of Hindustan Motors, to help Anand at Kurukshetra. Anand still remembers how a Contessa car took him to Kurukshetra from New Delhi. Whenever I used to go to New Delhi and stayed in one of the five-star hotels, particularly Maurya Sheraton, Anand would come and meet me. Anand went on asking me for whatever amount he felt like and I gave it. The monthly expenditure for him was about Rs 1600. Interestingly, the same for Rakesh at IIT, Kharagpur were at about Rs 800-900 and for Rajesh at BIT was about Rs 1200-1300.

Anand in his final year got interested in Taguchi's Quality Engineering that I was studying myself in those days. He selected that as his final project and wrote the final thesis on the subject. He also went to a number of conferences held in BITS, Pilani and IIT, Delhi and gave his presentation on Taguchi Methodology. After his final year, Anand got a job in L&T Engineering and construction division in Chennai. But he had appeared for GRE and TOEFL and applied for admission in some US colleges for MS. Finally when Arizona State University sent his papers for applying for visa, he resigned, came to New Delhi for getting his American visa. Finally Anand left for US to pursue the higher education on August 2, 1995 from Calcutta.





Anand Leaving for USA

I had arranged some fund for the first semester and I was sure that he would get some assistantship soon. Further, he had by then Rakesh, his elder brother in US to fall back on. Pretty soon Anand was earning for his education. As he later told me, Anand had a very good support from Himadri, one of his seniors in his Hartley's High School of Calcutta.

### **My Religious Interests**

I was not an extrovert and didn't develop huge social circles. Unfortunately, the social circles in India grow on one's identity- state, language and even caste with no reason for it whatsoever. Be it a club membership such as Rotary or Golf clubs or one of a religious body, mostly it is to get personal and selfish advantages from men in position. And unfortunately I was having in those days some power that could benefit some. I sought a way out to avoid those people who started coming only to seek such favours. After coming from the works I started spending time in reading Ram Charit Manas and Gita. Yamuna had to tell many a times a lie of some sorts to get rid of those unscrupulous persons and give me some peace. We were also regular in our Satya Narayan Katha on every full-moon day. It went on for many years till we came to Noida.



In temple at Hind Motor, during a special function



Styanarayan Puja on full moon day at home



Chhuth in River Hoghly on a ghat in Uttarpara (Background Dakshineswar Temple)





On the bank of Hooghly after Chhutt

For many years, I used to have limited fast on Tuesday. I ate only fruits, milk and boiled vegetables. I also carried out with Navratra fasts many years. Whenever, Yamuna wanted, I fasted on certain days of the year. Janmashtami was one. I also followed Yamuna and fasted for Chhuth. It was as Yamuna had so wished; I went for a Chhuth fast and rituals even in Pleasanton, USA in 2008.



Chhuth in Pleasanton



Pretty soon after Yamuna joined, I made it a practice to move together. I did never went to movie or to any social function alone.

### **In Office of Corporate Project Planning**

By 1982, I started feeling stuck in the organization. Even after many rumours and some confirmed indication, I didn't get the overall charge of the operation of HM. Some at the top wanted that to happen, but some who mattered could successfully block it. With the trio in schools and colleges by now, it was difficult to explore new job in new place. Unfortunately, I was based in Calcutta that didn't provide the opportunity. But perhaps I was not courageous enough to take risk.

The country's economy was changing slowly for better. Hindustan Motors had initiated a lot of projects for new businesses. It was planning to collaborate with Isuzu Motors of Japan for manufacturing engine and transmissions for its Contessa cars. It was also planning to establish a new Isuzu truck manufacturing plant. Mr. GC Bansal was the head of the corporate project planning. Mr. SL Bhattar asked me to join him. With a circular on September 7, 1983, I got shifted from the plant operation to CPP. As in the past, I didn't like my getting dissociated from the plant, the machining areas. But, there was no alternative.



Corporate Project Planning Manager

Surprisingly, Mr. SL Bhattar, as manager- corporate project planning, sent me to Belgaum to help Arun Engineering, one of our vendors who manufactured crankshafts, in some legal matter. The company had arranged for a visit of mine to Goa for a day.

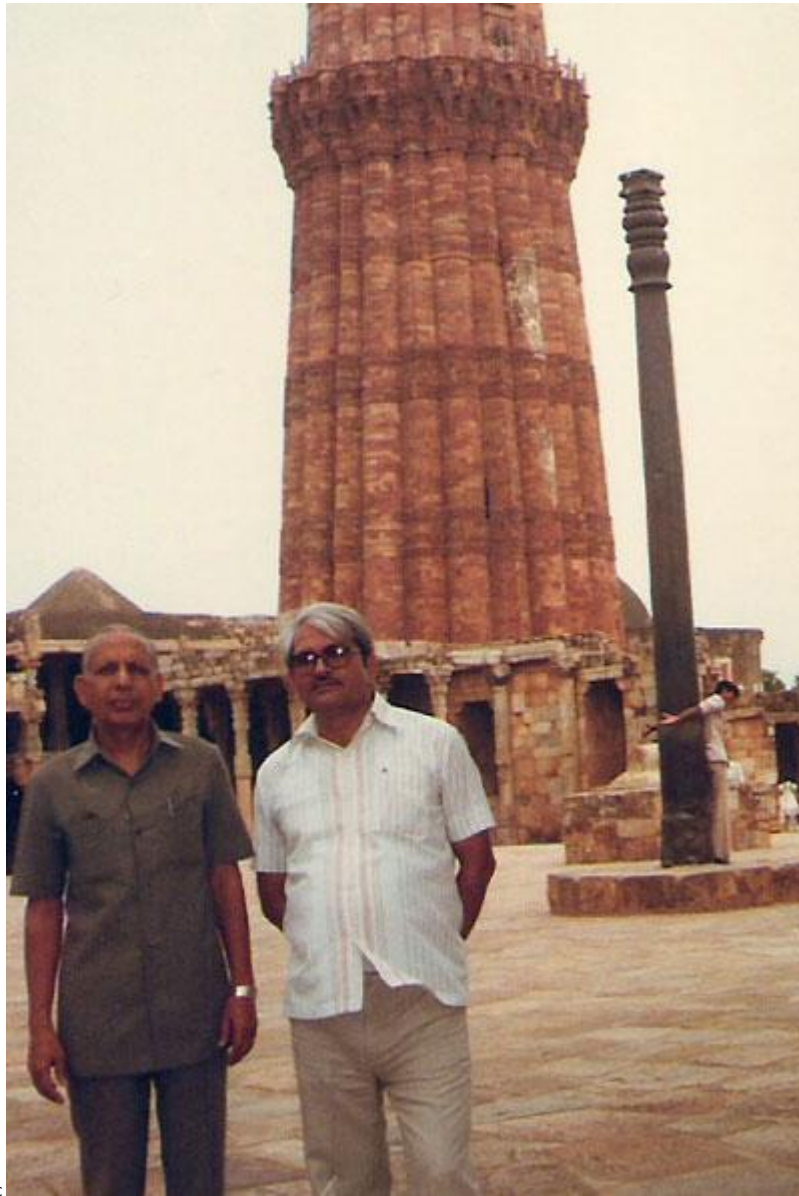


Goa from near Fort

I tried to visit the places of interest wherever I went and sometimes I also persuaded my colleagues to come along with me.



An elephant ride with Japanese guests enroute Agra



With Mr. KD Rungta in premises of Kutubminar, Delhi



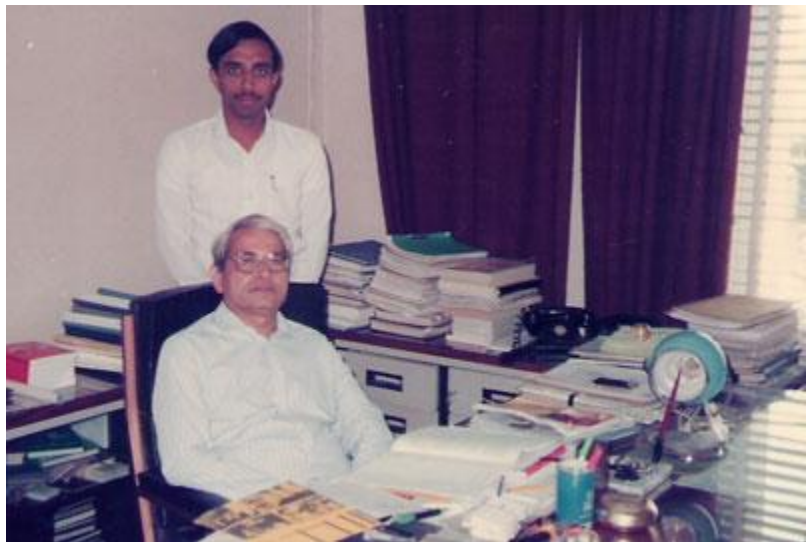
Courtesy Kaneki, Mitsubishi Motors at Mahabalipuram







At Taj Mahal with Japanese guests



Manager Corporate Planning

In Corporate Project Planning, Mr. Bansal had appointed some fresh graduate engineers. Mr. KM Agrawal, a senior from IIT, Kharagpur was already with Mr. Bansal. He had worked in the production engineering-mechanical of HM but he had spent a number of years in Birla's business in Nigeria.

I started with training the young engineers for the task of planning. It was entirely a fresh team. I had to unlearn a lot to learn the new tools and techniques of CPP.

HM management had decided to locate the Isuzu Truck Plant at Vadodara and the Engine and transmission plant at Pithampur near Indore. Mr. Bansal had been to Japan, but very soon he

took me and Mr. KM Agrawal also to study the manufacturing activities of Isuzu Motors and to decide the in-house manufacturing facilities for HM's new plants for our low volume production. Isuzu engineers had already provided some of their plans. I didn't agree with the approach that was based on very low technology. I wondered how the Japanese suggested that. It appeared Japanese like Britishers and Americans earlier had very poor opinion about Indian engineers. We, three, visited Japan for four weeks or more to study the manufacturing activities at Isuzu plants at Kawasaki and Fujisawa. It was really a difficult task to select appropriate technology, machine configurations and its automation level. Japanese processes were all for high automation and very low cycle time (time taken to produce a part from the machine tools after completion of all operations planned on it). HM's new projects were aiming to build manufacturing plants for very low annual capacity compared to that of Isuzu.



Isuzu Motors, 1983 with GC Bansal to my right and KM Agrawal on left



With GC Bansal in one of the visits to Isuzu Motors



Outside an Isuzu Motors Plant



With Planning Engineers of Isuzu Motors





With GC Bansal while visiting Japan

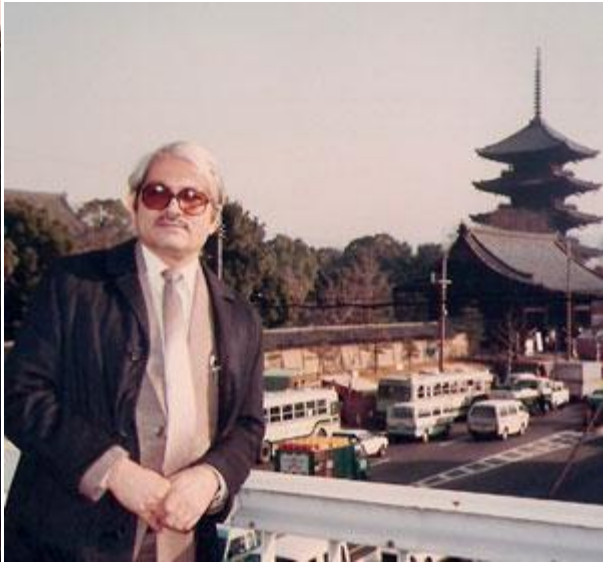


Photos during a Japan Visit

Initially the interaction with Japanese engineers appeared to be pretty difficult. I still remember one Mr. Ogawa who used to be in every team coming from Isuzu Motors and in every meeting that I attended in Japan. When we said anything, he would translate in Japanese for his engineers. Whatever the Japanese said in reply, Ogawa would again translate in English for us. It was a real time taking affair and many a times annoying too as he would use some word that would have no relevance. We would guess and communicate. In two-three attempts, we could reach at the right meaning.



While in Tokyo for Isuzu Motors. I went with KM Agrawal also to visit some machine tools companies such as Murata Warner Swasey and Kashifuzi in Kyoto and Nagoya. We spent some time for sightseeing in those old and beautiful cities of Japan.







Travelling in Japan's bullet train

We stayed in Akashaka Tokyu Hotel that was almost in the heart of Tokyo for few weeks. While I was in Tokyo, I walked through most of the city starting early in the morning on Saturday and Sunday with help of city maps. I used to be alone. On a Sunday, I also visited Tokyo's Disneyland along with Mr. KM Agrawal. I used the opportunity to go for a number of exciting rides too, though Agrawal didn't.





In the Disneyland of Tokyo in 1983

Mr. Bansal took us for number of shopping centres in Ginza and other places. As usual, we saved dollars from our allowances and bought an autofocus camera, a number of watches and a VCR along with a string of pearls. Isuzu Motors had also treated us in the famous Indian restaurant in Ginza, Tokyo on a dinner.





Left; In Ginza Tokyo; Right: Outside Murata Warner Swasey

On our way back, we stayed in Hong Kong almost for two days. We had visited an Indian family in one of its islands on a dinner. The gentleman was serving the British government and was a relative of Mr. Surjit Singh, one of the subordinates of Mr. Bansal at HM. As it was my first visit to the Asian giants, I really enjoyed that. I remember buying a number of saris from Hong Kong. I did not know at that time that I would be visiting the places a number of times while in HM.



In Hong Kong



With a family in Hong Kong

After our visit to Isuzu Motors we started finalizing our processes and list of machine tools and equipment required for its manufacturing. Many manufacturers and machine tools suppliers from Europe and Japan started visiting Hindustan Motors. Interestingly at that time Hindustan Motors was the only company in India that was talking about a major investment.



In a meeting with Mr. Momoki at HM Plant





With representatives of companies of Machine tools

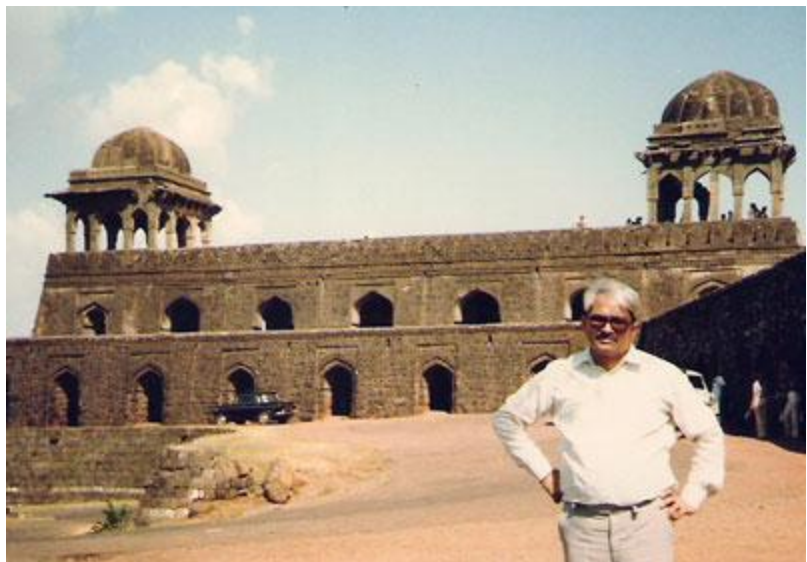
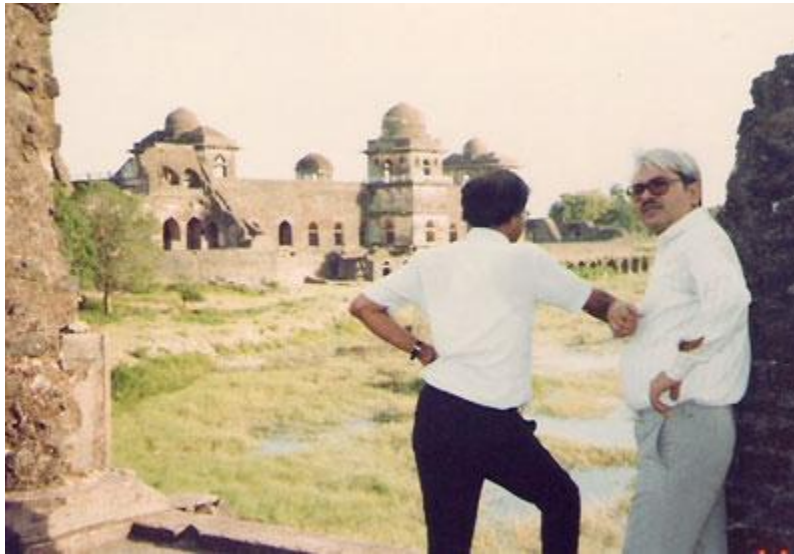
Very soon the management decided the organization for the two new HM units one at Vadodara and the other at Pithampur. Mr. NK Birla headed the Isuzu Truck Division at Vadodara with N Nanda assisting him. Mr. RC Rath was made the head of engine and transmission manufacturing division at Pithampur, Indore. I remained morose for some time, as I had expected myself to be attached with one of the two plants. Mr. NK Birla had himself expressed his anguish over the decision. He wished to take me with him, but Mr. Bhatner had managed to send Mr. Nanda with Mr. Birla who hardly liked him. That was again politics of a sort.

RC Rath was Mr. SL Bhatner's favourite and through him, Mr. Bhatner maintained his hold over the division. I couldn't even express my grievances. Mr. Rath was very shrewd and grew in



Hindustan Motors because of his pedigree and proximity that he maintained on all cost with Mr. Bhattar. However, I kept on working on the projects, helping the setting up of the two plants and in deciding the most appropriate machine tools and equipment for both the projects.

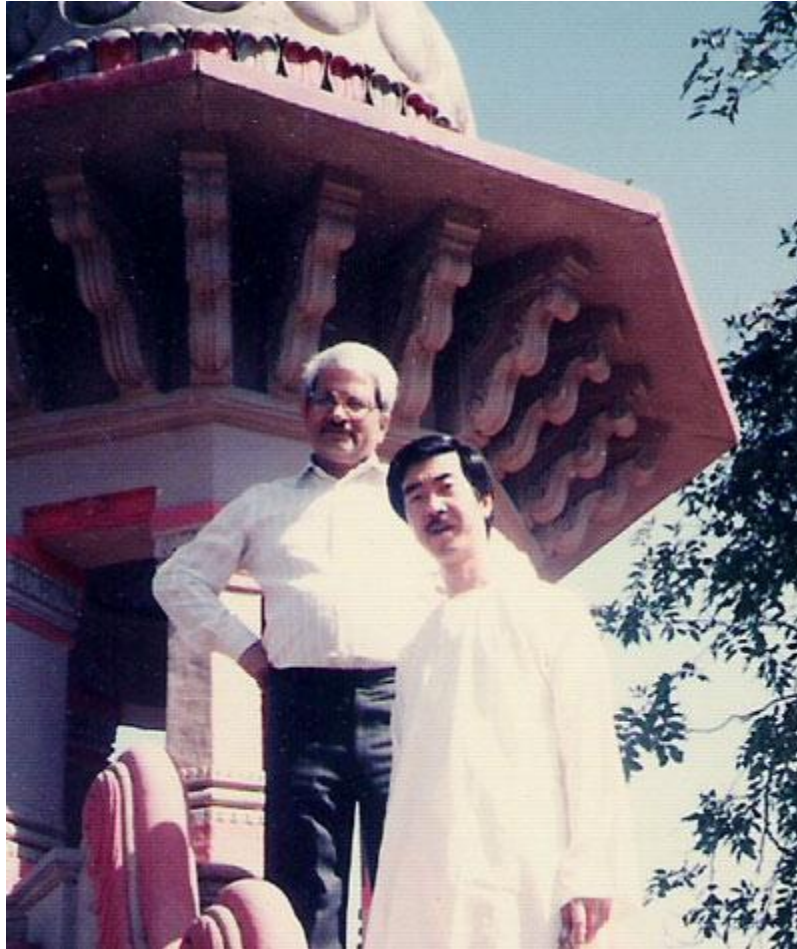
Those were the years when the company needed Capital Goods Licenses for importing equipment and machinery even for new projects with high tariffs of custom duty. Only the indigenous machinery didn't require going to DGTD for clearance. It was a real big task to make the specification of the required equipment in such a manner that no indigenous manufacturer had that in its equipment. It was a very poor way of selecting the best equipment for a new manufacturing unit.



At Mandu

I kept on moving between Indore, Vadodara, Delhi, Bangalore, and Hyderabad in the country and visiting abroad. Indore and Vadodara became the next workplace or office. While in Indore

I visited once Mandu, the place associated with Baj Bahadur and Rani Roopmati. On the way some tribal children threw some missiles on our car.



In Vadodara with Sueshi of Sumitomo, Japan

My first appreciation of computer, the PC, started in Corporate Project Planning. Mr. NK Birla had asked Zenith, Pune in those days to bring in a PC and demonstrate its application. Hindustan Motors had a full-fledged computer department with mainframe computers. Interestingly, the department had a nomenclature of IBM Department in those days rather than system department and its head reported to Finance Head. While passing from my cabin to the corporate office that was on the other side, I used to see the Zenith engineer idling with none with him. I asked Mr. GC Bansal and requested the engineer to train all fresh engineers of my department. They all, including the draughtsman, became conversant. Later on, the department got its own PCs. The project reports for Vadodara and Indore were prepared on the PC. It made the task of incorporating any change required for financial viability very easy and fast.

Later on, we had engaged a translator for Japanese too in the department.



A Farewell in Corporate Project Planning Department

At the home front, we had been discussing to decide about our final shelter once we retire from the company. I had a flat booked in Patna. But when I went to Patna with the dead body of BR Rai and saw the social life there, I decided to withdraw the booking. I couldn't have lived in Patna peacefully. Fortunately, I got an allotment of a residential plot in Salt Lake in 1982. The story as it went was pretty interesting and have mentioned later.

RC Rath and N Nanda had taken over the reins of Pithampur and Vadodara respectively and later on shifted out of Hind Motor. One of the main tasks of mine was to convince the financial agencies about the justification of investment and the selected technology level for the manufacturing. ICICI was the lead financier.







Top, Pithampur, Indore Plant under construction with ICICI executive and at Halol, bottom



At Halol Plant under construction with bankers





At Vadodara pLant with ICICI executive Shri Paul

I had to accompany Rath and Nanda or their engineers for the meetings with Isuzu Motors.



With Isuzu production engineers



Inside Assembly & Testing facility



At Isuzu Motors, Hokaido Plant

For the first time, Hindustan Motors wanted its executives to base their decision making properly. I went to see the machine tools, accessories and equipment of latest and proven technologies used in the automotive manufacturing exhibited in globally recognized fairs.

In October-November 1984, I visited the world famous machine tools show JIMTOF 84 in Tokyo to watch the latest manufacturing technology for low volume production of in-house auto components. I had left for Tokyo on a historic day on October 31, 1984. That was the day on which the then Prime Minister was shot dead by her guards. A bloody riot flared up in the whole country flared up. The trio was busy watching a cricket match. I was annoyed with them, as they had bunked the school. I was annoyed. But it proved to a boon in disguise. Yamuna had gone to Birlapur to perform Chhuth puja. She returned in time to accompany me to airport with JPN Rai. The driver had to take circuitous routes to reach Dum Dum. I went in for the

immigration and checking in. Yamuna went on roof of the building to see me departing. She came to know of the national mishap and the news of riot. The whole airport was agog. I could learn about the death of Indira only in the Business Class lounge of Bangkok Airport. Ajoy Das of machine Tools India was in the same flight. He had narrated the story. It was only after reaching Tokyo that I came to know that Yamuna had to stay in the ancestral house of AK Mukherji, the assistant office manager that night. The family showed exemplary hospitality. Yamuna went back to Hind Motor next day in an ambulance sent from the factory, as the whole city was under the fear of riot. Many parents in Hind Motor had to spend worrisome night for their children who had gone to their schools.



Next year, RC Rath joined me in Tokyo in JIMTOF 85. While in Tokyo for the fair, we visited a number of machine tools factories too, saw their facilities around Tokyo and discussed our requirements.



At JIMTOF, 1985 in Tokyo





In different stalls at JIMTOF

These machine tool fairs used to be occasions when I sometimes met some old friends. Particularly those connected with the industry.





At JIMTOF with Indian friends

I visited Europe with RC Rath for 6EMO Machine tools at Hannover during 17-25 September, 1985. Mr. J.V. Kesteren of Emag, the CNC turning machine manufacturer was the host. He had arranged a visit of a transmission plant of Volkswagenwerk AG at Kassel at Kassel to see a flexible gear manufacturing plant. A team from Chrysler Corporation was also with us. During Hannover, we saw the stalls of almost all the important machine tools manufacturers of Europe, their latest products and had discussion with them about HM's forth coming transmission and engine plant. I was trying to learn the latest of technologies used for gear manufacturing in automobile plants and had detailed discussion about the same with the most reputed manufacturers of the gear manufacturing machine tools and equipment such as Pfauter, Lorenz, Carl Hurth, Fassler, Liebherr, Klingelberg, and Prawema that could help in selecting the best machinery for a volume of just 15,000 transmissions annually. We were seeking built-in flexibility of the equipment for future product change. Though I lived with an worry about the health of my ailing father in Hind Motor, I could make it a very useful visit and developed extensive contacts that provided me with a lot of knowledge.



At Emag stall, Hannover Fair



After a visit of Volkswagenw

While returning I came via Amsterdam and went around it on a conducted tour. I returned via London.



In Amsterdam

Hindustan Motors then sent a batch of engineers for training at Isuzu Motors. Engineers with the corporate project planning went in its first batch and later on, some of them shifted to Indore and Vadodara.



With Engineer Trainees from CPP in Tokyo



N Nanda joined me once in Isuzu Motors when I was there with VV Verma, a trainee production engineer from Vadodara. It was the time that I had a severe harpies attack in my eyes while in Isuzu Motors. Mr. Ogawa took me to Isuzu dispensary. However, I had a real painful night. The trouble continued for a long time. Dr. Malay Roy Choudhry of Hind Motor Hospital helped me a lot. I got it checked by many doctors. I went to Sankar Netralaya in Chennai, the famous hospital for eye related diseases. I showed it to a famous doctor in London too that was arranged through a common friend in UK.



Travelling on train in Japan with Harpies in eye

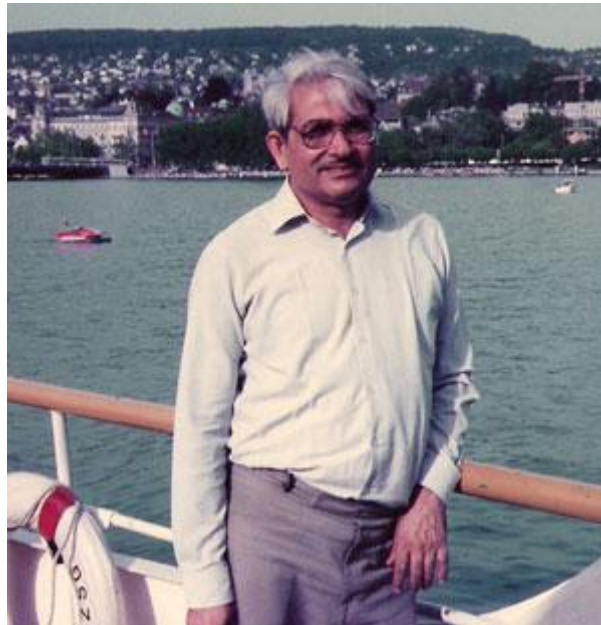


With N Nanda in Tokyo during a visit to Isuzu Motors

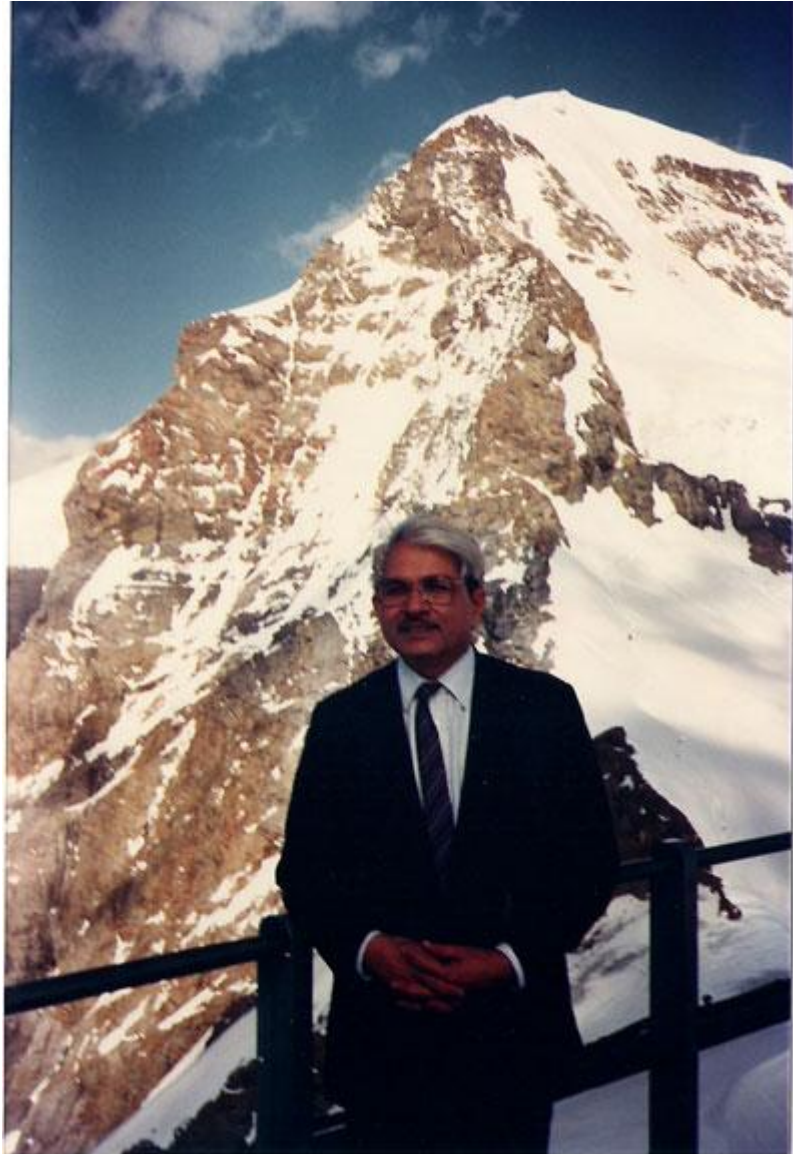


I had written a large number of troubleshooting checklists for all the machining processes basically for educating the production supervisors of the machining areas in Hindustan Motors. I happened to send the manuscript to Mr. Rajiv Beri of Tata McGraw Hill, New Delhi through Vohra who used to work for vendor quality of Hindustan Motors in New Delhi. Beri agreed to publish my book. I was really delighted. Vohra kept on sending the printed materials for proof reading to Calcutta. After corrections I used to return. 'Troubleshooting Handbook- Machining' finally got published in 1986. The publisher had priced it at Rs 120, and I got Rs 12 per copy sold.

In September 1987, I with Mr. GC Bansal and RC Rath visited a large number of the manufacturing plants of the European machine tools builders. The main purpose of the visit was to see the machine tools that were to be procured for the Transmission and Engine plant at Pithampur. Mrs. Rath and Mr. Seth of PMT, Bombay accompanied us. Because of my acquaintances with their representatives over the years, I had arranged all the meetings. We reached Milano, Italy on September 7 from London, moved to Piacenza, stayed in night in Hotel Roma, next day visited Mandelli and then Ferrari Plant with Mr. C. Ghezzi and saw flexible machining system for cylinder blocks and cylinder heads. M. Fabri took us around Marposs, the in-process and post-process electronic gauging systems, and R Marchioni around Pai-Demn that manufactured Gear hobbing and shaping machines. On September 9, we visited Samputensili that manufactured grinders for gear shaving cutters and gear testing machines and met Dr. Bianco and Dr. Rapezzi. On Sept 10, we visited Varinelli, Sicmat and Comau. We flew from Milano to Zurich on September 12, where we visited Zurich Lake and then travelled by train to the base town to visit Jungfrau. The experiences of sailing on Zurich Lake and that of the top of Jungfrau remain vivid and memorable.



Zurich Lake



In Zurich







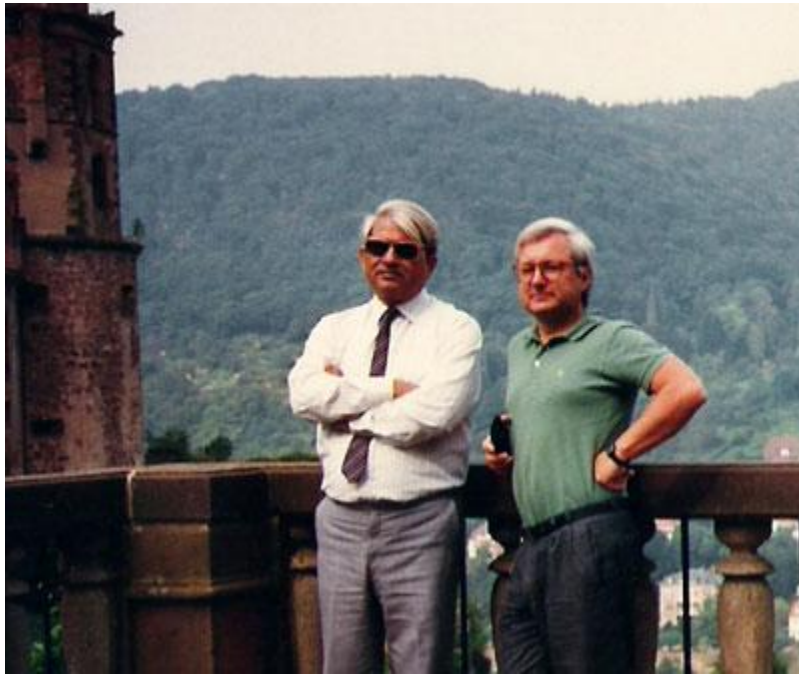
Above Photographs on Jungfrau

Before flying to Stuttgart, we travelled to Neuchatel to visit Voumard plant that produced CNC Internal Grinding machines. Switzerland left a lasting impression. It was really picturesque and wonderful. Between September 15 and 22, we stayed at Hotel Schlossgraten in Stuttgart and visited Emag, Pfauter, Fortuna, Boehringer, Schaudt, Lorenz and Alfing Kessler. On September 22, Mr. Gallizzi of Volkart drove us from Stuttgart to Munich. On September 23-25, we visited Hurth, Leibherr, and finally Prawema.













During trip from Stuttgart at various places

As Hindustan Motors was setting up the production facility for about 15,000 per annum, most of the machine tools and equipment for machining of transmission gears and components such as connecting rods were to be flexible in design so that it can be easily adopted in case of design change. I kept on getting the feature of flexibility integrated in the machine for any

new product of the family. For example, the totally CNC cam grinder of Fortuna could generate any cam form for a camshaft for the engine without requiring different master cam banks used in traditional cam grinders. Hindustan Motors, Pithampur came up as one of the best manufacturing plants of its time in India. The visit was very educative for me. I could know how CNC control was bringing a revolution in the capability of the machine tools making it flexible and even reconfigurable. In those years I was pretty known in the industrial circles for my expertise in machining. Even the HMT engineers and managers used to seek my ideas and suggestions while proposing machining lines to its customers.

### **To Bangla Desh**

Bangala Desh had been a good market for HM's trucks since HM started building Vauxhall's Bedford. The country had good servicing facilities for Bedfords when it was part of Pakistan. With CKD components, Pragati Industries, Bangla Desh used to manufacture Bedford Trucks for which Hindustan Motors had all the latest facilities. I was among the group of executives who visited Bangla Desh in August 1989 for assisting Pragati Industries in indigenizing some parts locally. We flew to Dacca from Calcutta and later on after seeing the plants around the capital went to Chattagram by train. My biggest shock of life was when we were staying at Sonar Gaon, the best hotel in Dacca. Two of us were strict vegetarian. It was surprising that the hotel of a country that was a part of India before independence in 1947 couldn't provide vegetarian food. We had to give special instruction to prepare potato mesh to eat with rice.



Outside Pragati Industries, Bangladesh



In Bangladesh with KM Agrawal on my right, Basu and N Nanda on my left at a party

Bangla Desh had some big manufacturing factories built during the period it was a part of Pakistan. Pragati Industries had a good facility for assembling automobiles of different manufacturers from ckd components. It assembled and marketed Hindustan trucks. Hindustan was basically Vauxhall's Bedford model and was pretty popular in Bangla Desh. However, Bangla Desh as we saw then was really poor. We had visited some of the apparel stitching plants too, where in a big hall a large number of young girls and women worked. The Chinese were supplying equipment, design and clothes for the apparels. Those girls and women got a payment of Rs 10-15 in Bangla Desh currency for a day work. While moving around in suburbs of Dacca, I saw some demolished temples too that really pained me. Lunches and dinners were lavish, but troublesome for at least two of the vegetarians in the team. We had to manage.

We had our CG licences cleared from DGTD, New Delhi. I with Mr. GC Bansal accompanied Mr. SL Bhattar when he went to Japan for ordering the machine tools. Wives of Mr. Bhattar and Bansal accompanied them. I would have taken Yamuna, but Babuji was with us in Hind Motor. Someone was to be with him. Shortly after I returned, he breathed his last on September 24, 1989.

We were there in Japan between September 1 and September 18, 1989. Unfortunately, almost all the machine tools manufacturers who had quoted refused to take the major orders of the machining lines for cylinder block and cylinder head because of their preoccupation and inability to meet the time frame desired by Hindustan Motors. Mr. Momoki was the main person who had arranged most of the offers. Finally, Mr. Bansal called Mr. McLaren, who was known to Hindustan Motors since days of purchase of the Cross

Transfer machines for Uttarpara plant. And the biggest order for the flexible line for machining cylinder blocks of Isuzu engines at Pithampur finally went to Cincinnati Milacron, USA. However, the orders for Landis Crankshaft Grinders and some other gear manufacturing machine tools were placed with Mr. Momoki and Sumitomo Corporation of Japan. I had developed a good friendship with Mr. Momoki by then. Unfortunately, pretty soon he died.



Me, Mrs. Bansal, Bansal, Mr. Bhatler and Mrs. Bhatler

I had felt bad as Cincinnati didn't provide the technologies and specifications that I had decided upon based on my interactions with the best of the manufacturers of the time. I had also realized that the Japanese are not very good in business strategies. For any manufacturing company to be world class, it must reserve certain capacity for export.

McLaren visited us with the team of Cincinnati Milacron that came to HM with details of the proposal for a flexible machining system for cylinder blocks. Mr. Hilmer was the technical person in the team. He became very friendly with me.

Mr. SL Bhatler with Bansal and Rath played the main role in ordering of all the machine tools for Pithampur project. I provided my opinion on technical issues only. I used to feel bad but there must be something in negotiation that made Mr. Bhatler to keep his own confidential men in final negotiation.

### **General Manager-Technical Services**

The corporate planning work on Indore project was coming to end. Mr. RC Rath had moved to Indore and had formed his team to set up and run the plant. I provided him help whenever he wanted. Unfortunately because of his weakness for persons from Orissa, others such as even his



very close assistants JN Prasad and Mahendra Kumar were made to shift back to Uttarpara plant. It was really shocking that even Rath died suddenly pretty soon.

After the Isuzu commercial vehicle project at Vadodara failed, Hindustan Motors started talking and negotiating with General Motors for a joint venture for manufacturing cars. Both GM Overseas Group and GM Opel, Germany got involved. I got busy with preparing the project report for the manufacture of GM Opel's Kadett cars in the Vadodara Plant that was already built. GM Group visited Hindustan Motors at Uttarpara too to find out the best way of manufacturing the car at the minimal investment. I came in contact with many GM experts from USA.



GM team inside the Satya Narayan Temple at Hind Motor

Interestingly, they came to Hind Motor on a day when the management was having a ritual at the temple in the factory complex. I had to take them around and convince them about HM's capability. Mr. SL Bhattar also took keen interest in showing the GM team the Lakshmi Narayan Temple.



At Hind Motor Temple with GM Team

McKinsey had been engaged by Hindustan Motors as consultants to give HM remedies for its ill so that it could execute new projects. Mr. CK Birla had brought Mr. ML Pachisia from his African operation to take the charge of Hindustan Motors at Uttarpara. Mr. Bhattar became dormant. Mr. Pachisia gradually built his team. Some got transferred. My neighbor Paul

Choudhry had taken over the responsibility of manufacturing from Mr. RC Rath when he went to Indore. He was considered almost as indispensable because of his closeness to the union leaders and even to some ministers in West Bengal government of the day. Based on some company intelligence, Mr. Pachisia got him shifted to Heavy Engineering division.

Mr. SL Bhattar one day talked with me about going back to operation again. Mr. Pachisia called me and offered me to join his team. Somehow I had expected that he would give the total responsibility of manufacturing operation. However, he outright said that he wanted me to be the General Manager-Technical Services looking after all the non-manufacturing activities of Hind Motor Plant. He had already selected the GM for the manufacturing operation who happened to be my subordinate when I was Manufacturing Manager-mechanical division. It was a difficult proposition. However, I had to accept it as I wanted Rajesh an admission in BIT, Mesra (Ranchi) in engineering.



In Flat 4

On May 8, 1990, I returned to operation management again in Hind Motor as General Manager-Technical Services responsible for production engineering- mechanical (tool room and tryout), as well as sheet metal (die shop, jig fixture construction and die tryout) divisions, industrial engineering, works engineering and production planning and control with general stores. I didn't have any firsthand experience of most of the departments that came under me. I had to devote a lot of time to understand its activities and learn some of the technical aspects. Sheet metal division was totally new. Stamping, body engineering and painting are specialized subjects. As usual I found that most of the managers were having very little knowledge. And perhaps that was the reason that very soon I picked up the technical knowledge good enough to control and guide them. During my stay as the head I contributed in many ways to improve the working of the departments.

Many had congratulated me for this change. Mr. GC Bansal, who missed me most, thought the change was the best for me. According to him, it had never happened in past. Mr. SY Jagatdar who after holding one of the key top positions in TELCO was engaged as consultant by Hindustan Motors liked this change as it made me knowledgeable about the total technical



activities going in automobile manufacturing. Many senior executives, particularly Marwari ones were expecting me to head the total operation of the company. Some of them were even morose. Hearing all that was pleasant to ears and satisfying too.

My biggest problem for quite few months was the difficulty in covering the areas under my control. It used to be a long tiring walk of around 10 kms even if I went for one round of the departments under me. To talk with the assistants used to be really difficult as most of the times, they would be on shop floor. I had to ask someone to tell them to contact me. And may be that by the time, they called me I was somewhere else. Finally, I got a company car in 1991 again and I could use it inside the factory premises. I wish the cell phones would have appeared by then. The life would have been much easier.



The car that I got from HM in 1991 on way to tarkeshwar





General Manager-Technical Services

Hindustan Motors had decided to take up the task of improving the performance of Ambassador's engine and transmissions to make it more contemporary and to remove some of the usual customer complaints. It appointed Ricardo Engineers UK for the task.

Mr. NK Shukla by then was back to Engineering Department from his stint as Vice-President – manufacturing. He had initiated the idea of using a consultant for product development. After I came back to the plant, he took me to England twice as a team member for discussing the design change of Ambassador with Ricardo Engineers, a UK company to support the team with the manufacturing aspects of the suggested changes and its cost viability. My responsibility was to integrate the manufacturability in the design changes suggested by Ricardo and keep them informed about the investment that will be necessary to incorporate the engineering changes. Hindustan Motors had a very high production dedicated transfer machines for the machining of components such as cylinder block and cylinder heads. Any engineering change that couldn't be easily integrated on the machine would have required separate machine tools and thus many practical inconveniences.

In 1990, between August 12 and 18, I visited Ricardo Engineers with NK Shukla, VK Bhatt, TRS Murty, Adib, and CK Mendiratta. Beside me and Mendiratta, all were from R&D rather engineering department of Hindustan Motors. Courtesy Air India we received the wonderful hospitality of first class flying up to Heathrow. We stayed at Brighton on the seaside.



With TSR Murty, Bhatt, NK Shukla and CK Mendiratta during the visit to Ricardo Engineers, UK



With TSR Murty and NK Shukla



With TSR Murthy and CK Mendiratta

At one time when BM Birla was alive, the engineering department of Hindustan Motors was the best in the country. All the section heads had extensive training in General Motors Technical Center in US. TSR Murthy was the only from the group left with HM. Unfortunately, Hindustan Motors kept on losing the talent and the management didn't bring in the right hardcore technocrats to work on the engineering problems. Interestingly NK Shukla had a background of metallurgy and VK Bhatt was brought in from heavy Engineering division. The speed of progress at the Ricardo Engineers was pretty slow. Even the engineers didn't impress me much.

While returning but for Mr. NK Shukla, the team stayed for a night in London and spent a day in Paris again. We went around all the places of interest. However, I found every one more interested in saving from the daily allowances from the company rather than spending on holidaying.

In 1990 between November 6 and 18, again, I visited General Motors manufacturing plants in Europe, when we went there for a meeting regarding collaboration for getting Opel Kadett in India. I went to Dusseldorf, stayed at Park Hotel at Dortmund and visited Opel Bochum and Russelsheim plants. As it appeared there was a lot of misunderstanding about the project between Adam Opel group and GM Overseas group. All that got sorted out through the meeting. My visit to Bochum and Russelsheim plants were very informative. Besides seeing the machining facilities of the main components such as cylinder block, cylinder head, crankshaft, camshaft, connecting rods and differential cages, I could see the huge sheet metal stamping facilities of the Opel plant that had large number of automatic and latest press lines. I am sure that was one of the best facilities in the world. It helped me in preparing the project's facilities details and its estimates.

HM kept sliding down in the auto business. HM couldn't pursue its venture in Isuzu truck manufacturing because of many reasons. One was certainly the appreciation of Japanese Yen. But HM management also missed the amount of guts that are required to get a new project going. One more reason was the untimely death of Mr. NK Birla who perhaps could make it happen. Outsiders, mainly from Tata Motors, misguided and ditched the HM management. Tata Motors were really scared of HM's Isuzu Project, as it would have been a contemporary world class product in Indian market for the first time. Neither Tata Motors nor Ashok Leyland was producing any technologically competitive products in those days.

The Isuzu plant for commercial vehicles was almost closed. Hindustan Motors was trying to use the huge plant built at Vadodara, Gujarat for some new product. Ultimately, the project materialized. Initially, GM and CK Birla Group had 50:50 participations. However, pretty soon, CK Group exited. It was from this plant that GM India launched Kadett.

While working as General Manager-Technical Services, I worked very hard and made some landmark changes almost in every part of the factory. I remember one instance of the early days in the assignment. I was walking through Jigs and Manufacturing Shop of Sheet Metal Division. A huge fixture was in making. It was called Main Jig, as all the major panels used to get welded in it to create the body shell. I asked the technicians if they knew where it would be used and what problems the production workers are facing with the jig in use presently. None had asked them that before. How could one manufacture something better if they had not seen the task and its problems? I started the practice of getting the technicians involved into productionization at very early stage. It cut many errors that would to be corrected later on.

Hindustan Motors introduced a major change in Ambassador for improved suspension and steering under a model name NOVA. It all got implemented when I was General Manager-Technical Services. Unfortunately, it was not a very well engineered change. HM would have appointed a consulting agency such as Ricardo or Lotus for that work on turnkey basis. HM engaged McKinsey Consultant for, perhaps, satisfying the bankers for its projects with Mitsubishi products. My experiences with McKinsey were very poor. It created a large number of change centres for almost every department that produced a lot of paper work. But it never helped HM in getting them implemented. I spent major of my time in meetings almost two everyday in one or the other change centres.

The money spent on the consultants might have made bankers happy and given some confidence about their loaning to Hindustan Motors, but Hindustan Motors got hardly benefited. It never implemented the changes suggested by Ricardo in mechanicals nor did it incorporate the changes suggested by Lotus for body shape. It all needed a lot of investment. Basically Hindustan Motors needed a new plant to manufacture rather than replacement of some machine tools and equipment.

Unfortunately I got attack of gout and then herpes on chest for the first time in 1992. It was a horrible experience of bearing extreme pain of the deceases. Doctors and their treatment hardly gave me any relief. I was out of office for almost two weeks. And as usual many visited me regularly at home to show their sympathy.



But 1992 was a significantly important year. I could document my knowledge and experience of gear manufacturing in a volume that I named 'A Treatise on Gear manufacturing.' It had all that I had learnt about gear manufacturing from working as manufacturing manager in HM, from the visits and discussions with the experts of Isuzu Motors, Mitsubishi Motors, and those of the best gear cutting and finishing machines' manufacturers of the world. I had many dreams about publishing it through Society of Manufacturing Engineers or at least through some reputed publisher in India. As I got busy with my assignment in the factory, I tried a little but failed. However, the photocopy version of the spiral bound book got very well received by the technocrats in the industry. Almost all gear manufacturers bought a copy of it. TELCO (presently known as Tata Motors) considered me an expert on gear manufacturing and decided to call me for training their engineers. It materialized only in 1993.

In 1992 one day Mr. SL Bhattar in presence of Mr. Pachisia suggested me a change in organization with division of the manufacturing plant at Hind Motor in two; Sheet metal and mechanical divisions. They suggested me to head the mechanical division. Perhaps it would have been with a better sounding designation such as vice-president too. The sheet metal was to go to my colleague who was till then looking after manufacturing operation. I was interested to continue as technical head. I did not only refuse but also advised them not to do that in the interest of the organization. Later on even on a plant visit of Hind Motor, Mr. CK Birla taunted me for not agreeing to the change. It only meant that he was told about my non-acceptance of the idea of the division. I couldn't know who had put that idea in their mind. Actually, there was no challenge in the offer. I had been holding that responsibility when I was Manufacturing Manager- Mechanical. I was shore on the offer, as many seniors in age and position had made me aspiring to be the overall head of the plant. I had for many years been working with that zeal with that expectation, though I kept on telling to outsiders that I could become the president of the country but not the President of Hindustan Motors as I was not born Marwari.

## **AJIRA: Down the Memory Lane**

Whatever I had saved from my salaries in HM, I had spent first in the enterprises of Nand Kishore Chacha, my youngest uncle at Pipra and later on to satisfy the wishes of my mother in different projects such as building a house in Bodarhi, an well and organizing a Yagya.

I loved the house built in Bodarhi. I went many times after its completion to live with my parents for holidays. I loved the mango trees that had come up in the big courtyard.



In the courtyard of Bodarhi house

But Yamuna wanted to have a shelter in some metro city.

One day I was discussing our intention with BP Singh who was very close to us, I knew him as he was also a mechanical engineer from BIT, Mesra and an executive trainee of our batch. He had later on left Hindustan Motors to manage the brickfields of his father. He also set up a small manufacturing factory in Patna and built a beautiful house on Boring road. BP Singh suggested me to get a flat booked in the Ashiana complex that was coming up in Patna. Yamuna and I discussed and gave a cheque of Rs 10,000 to BP Singh to get it booked.

And then something happened that ultimately gave me a house in Calcutta. I was then the Chief Production Engineer, Mechanical in Hindustan Motors, Uttarpara. PK Banerji was working for me in as chief planning engineer. One day Banerji asked me to tell Chitto Bhattacharya, who worked as clerk in my office when I was manager in Axle Plant, to get allotted a plot of land in Salt Lake for building a residence of my own. I never knew that Bhattacharya was so an important person and he had so close contact with the Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu. I called Bhattacharya and expressed my desire. Bhattacharya requested me to put an application requesting for getting a plot of land in Salt Lake to build a house for permanent settlement after retirement and I did. I was surprised when I received a letter dated October 28, 1981, allotting me a little more than 4 kathas (around 3500 sq.ft.) of land in Salt Lake, sector II on a lease of 999 years at the rate of Rs 10,000 per katha.

I had also booked a flat in Salt Lake in Karunamayee complex in early 1981 and paid Rs 10,000 through a PF loan. Thereafter, I got the letter of allotment of a 4.33 kathas land in Salt Lake. There was no other way to finance it. I went to take a non-refundable loan of Rs 50,000 from the Provident Fund Account in November '81. I deposited a total of Rs 42,959 for the final lease deed of the land.

Later on, I got redeemed the advance that I had given for the flat in Karunamayee. It became a necessity as I got an opportunity to take Yamuna with me to UK in 1982. Whatever I had saved from my salaries in HM, I had spent first in the enterprises of Nand Kishore Chacha, my youngest uncle at Pipra and later on to satisfy the wishes of my mother in different projects such as building a house in Bodarhi, an well and organizing a Yagya.

My mother was not very happy first with the location of the land that I had purchased in Salt Lake. One day I sent my mother to see the land that I had bought. As I was told, she was very unhappy to see the land and said, “Why did my son select this barren place for building a house. Could not he find a better place?”



AJIRA under construction

It took almost six long years to start the work of construction of AJIRA because of the constraints of finance. I was also professionally too busy. All the three kids had gone to engineering colleges after schooling increasing the monthly expenditures. And our aging and

ailing parents were staying with us. We had to spend a lot of money on the treatment of Babuji. There were many other social commitments too.

I remember one day I was having my usual evening walk on the road connecting new flat area of Hind Motor Colony to officers' flat zone. Yamuna asked me, "How will you manage buying ornaments for the marriages of your daughters-in-law and building the house at Salt Lake?"

"Ok, why don't you start the Salt Lake construction?"

I had just Rs, 50,000 or so in my saving. One BANDO was the architect. He got the plan that was of a typical three storied building with 4 bedrooms about 1700 square feet in each storey for each son, sanctioned. The decision was the result of a typical middle class mentality for leaving behind a house for the offspring.

On February 8, 1988, Yamuna went to Salt Lake with Ramji Misra, the family priest, Rita, my cousin sister, and Anand to perform the ritual for starting the construction. And the foundation was cast on February 25, 1988.



Ritual after the completion of ground floor

It was in July 1989 that the ground floor got completed. That was the year Rakesh went to Purdue University in USA for his MS. AJIRA made it happen. It was unfortunate thing but somehow my parents could not see the completed AJIRA. Perhaps that was their destiny or mine. The second floor took another year. It was in the last quarter of 1992, finally AJIRA was ready for hosting the guests for some of the functions related to the marriage of Rakesh and Alpana.





AJIRA, CJ 120, Salt Lake as it shaped

I had organized a Shiva Yagya again the second by us. Raj Kishore Chacha and Chachi did all the rituals and listened to the story from the scripture. The seven day Yagya had finished on the day the relatives of Alpana came and performed the tilak ceremony with a big feast (Brahmbhoj).

The construction of AJIRA was slow in bits and pieces but steady. I was almost intoxicated to get it finished. Every roof casting required around Rs 40,000 or so in those days. I had to arrange it through all my savings as well as by disposing off some minor properties in Bodarhi and Pipra. I could also put my relatives to test by asking them for help. Girija, the youngest sister of Yamuna was the only who loaned me Rs 30,000. We could return it by selling my loving car WBG 8287 at Rs 30,000 or a little more in late 1990. When I was in Jamshedpur for a conference in January, 1991, we went to Gumla near Ranchi for returning it personally to Girija. I had to experience minor troubles with the contractors, the supervisors, and material vendors. Yamuna put her best and worked hard to make the dream realized. While Anand tackled some of the worst contractors that I employed, Rajesh and Shephali could become a savior for me by making the rogue tenant leave the premise in 1998. Yamuna provided physical supervision and enthusiasm to arrange the resources to complete the project. AJIRA became a reality.



A breakfast on one visit to Ajira from Noida

I disposed of AJIRA in 2010, as I was finding it difficult to manage. I took consent of my trio of US too. Hardly some, not even Yamuna, could appreciate my agony. It's good that Yamuna is not very emotional with anything like me. I had a similar experience when I had sold the properties of Bodarhi including the house that I built with and for my mother.

Today AJIRA has become a part of history leaving behind many good as well as nightmarish memories. AJIRA gave me a respect among the known friends and relatives, a self confidence and security, and a faith in Almighty and destiny.

Over the years, I have sold almost all the inherited property of Bodarhi and then Pipra. It may be true that if I could have managed to retain it, I would have been multi-millionaire. But the returns from the properties in those days when I decided to sell were not worth the amount of pain in managing it. Even the memory of one night in Sasaram on July 29, 1995 when I was there to finally sign the registration document for Bodarhi property as recorded in my diary would justify my decision.

### **Alpana Marries Rakesh**

Rajesh went to BIT, Mesra in 1990. Anand passed out his class XII in 1991 and went to Regional Engineering College, Kurushetra.

Rakesh graduated from Purdue University in 1991. I wanted him to pursue Ph.D. But he decided to get employed and joined Decision Technologies, a subsidiary company of American Airlines in Fort Worth, Dallas. Conversations regarding the marriage of Rakesh in the family became intense. I wished to select a technocrat girl for him. In 1992, finally the decision narrowed to

marry Rakesh with Alpana, the younger daughter of Dr. Gopal Sinha. Kamakhya played the major role.

Interestingly, Yamuna had met with Alpana in Bihar Institute of Technology, Sindri when she was on a hunt for a match for Rakesh in 1988. She had visited Sindri and Dhanbad with Mrs. Kamakhya Singh, his eldest daughter, Smita and Anand and met with some girls whose parents had contacted us. My mother was alive and she had a wish to see Rakesh, her grandson married in her life time. With our old mindset, we wished to engage Rakesh before he would have left for US. We did that against the wishes of Rakesh. I had taken some cash as 'barechha' (advance) too as per the practice. Yamuna and Rajesh had seen the girl who had an education from Vanasthali, Rajasthan and living with her father at Ghatshila at that time. After Rakesh left, we advised the father of the girl to prepare her for a life in US, but he was hesitant. We failed to convince him. One day when Rakesh expressed his opinion about the issue from US, I could realize my grave mistake for which I would never be able to excuse myself. I returned the money and got a relief and peace of mind.

Dr. Gopal Sinha, was the eldest son of Dr. Sudarshan Sinha, former Vice Chancellor of Patna University. Gopal Sinha was a contemporary and close friend of Kamkhaya Singh, the brother-in-law of BP Singh in TISCO (present Tata Steel). Later on, Kamakhya had joined HM with me and had become a close friend. I had helped Kamkhaya in moving back to live with his aging parents in Baidyabati from his job in TISCO by getting a job in Hindustan Motors. Kamakhya's family by 1992 had become very close to our family.

Actually it was Kamakhya who made Dr. Gopal Sinha invite me for a talk- 'Quality Fads-reasons of Rise and Fall- and also to be chairman of a session in National Conference on Quantitative Approach to Total Quality Management' on August 30, 1991 in Jamshedpur, for which he was the convener. After my talk that in XLRI Campos, I returned to TISCO House where I was staying that night. In evening, Mr. Gopal Sinha came to meet me with wife and the younger daughter, Alpana. She was brought in against her wishes from the RIT, Jamshedpur where she was completing her graduate course in metallurgical engineering. I had asked her if she would help me in writing my chapter on heat treatment for my book on gear manufacturing that I was writing in those days. She hesitatingly nodded. I liked her. But I took time to give my final consent as I wanted Rakesh to agree to our proposal this time. That worried extended Sinha family and also Kamakhya. Finally, Rajesh, Anand, Yamuna made Rakesh agree. I consented. And many from Dr. Sinha and his extended family including his father-in-law, Justice KB Sinha visited us. Alpana passed out her engineering and got a job in TISCO. On our advice, she appeared for GRE and TOEFL too. Interestingly, she had come and stayed with us all alone in Hind Motor for appearing in those examinations. We had also visited Jamshedpur.

I remember when I had informed Mr. SL Bhattar one day about my decision to marry Rakesh, he had asked if they had met and agreed. When I replied in negative, he expressed his surprise and was almost shocked about my backwardness.

Rakesh came from USA. On the day of tilak, I had organized three functions. At Taj Bengal, Rakesh and Alpana had the court marriage with registrar taken to the hotel. At AJIRA, I had the purnahooti and brahmanbhoj of the yagya that was going on for last seven days. And in evening,

we had tilak ceremony in Flat 4 of Hind Motor. I still remember the day-full of excitement, tension, worries and happiness vividly. I was at the head of control room coordinating all the activities without any major hold up. I had neither invited many of the acquaintances of Hind Motor for Tilak nor arranged for their dinner. However, the crowd was in hundreds. And thanks to some real hard working subordinates, they could manage it.

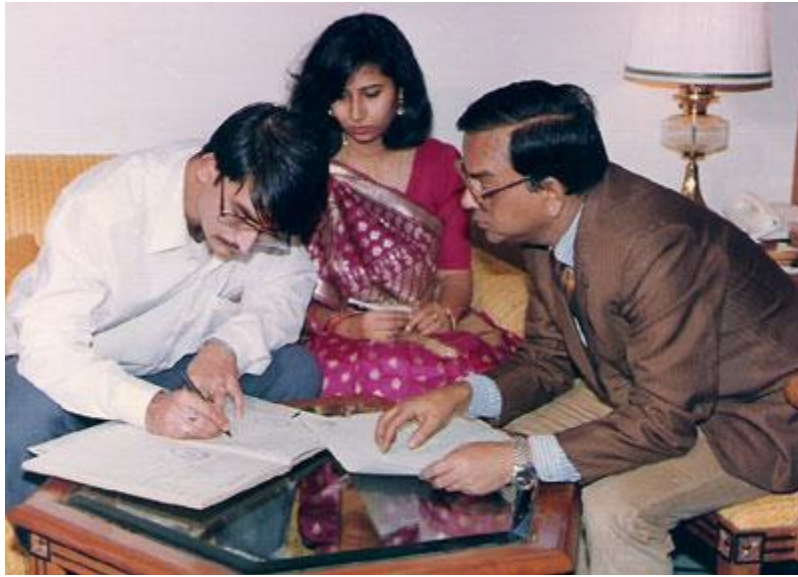


In the family of Alpana in Jamshedpur before marriage



Dr. Gopal Sinha and Kamkhaya Singh at Flat 4 before marriage





Registration of Marriage, Taj Bengal



Re

Rakesh and Alpana after registration of marriage



Me with Dr. Sudarsan and Gopal Sinha at Tilak



A function before the marriage at Flat 4, Hind Motor



Marriage cavalcade moving towards Jamshedpur



Before the marriage procession in guest house



After Garland Exchange in Jamshedpur





Mamaji, me and Dr. Sudarsan Sinha in Jamshedpur



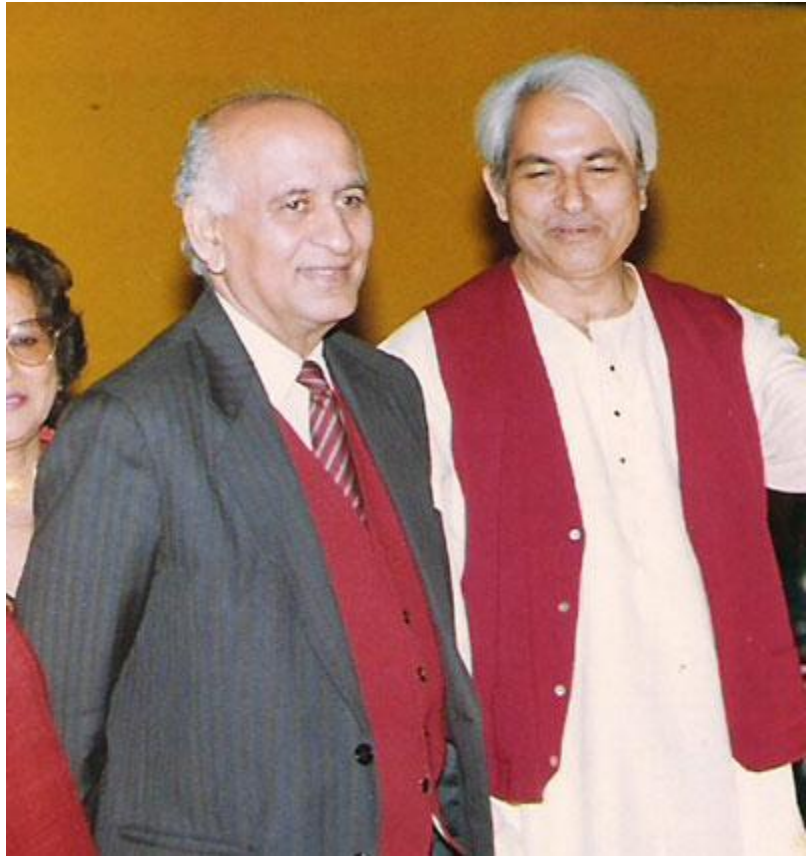
Trio at Rakesh's marriage 1993



Flat 4 on the day of reception of Rakesh's marriage 1993



Yamuna with Mrs. SL Bhatler











At Reception with Bhattars

Finally, Rakesh was married with Alpana on January 27, 1993. It was the first marriage in my small family. My parents were no more to see their grandson getting married. But I invited everyone from the family of Pipra. Few relatives also joined. I still remember the car convoy that went to Jamshedpur for marriage. Friends of Rajesh from BIT, Mesra had joined the marriage procession and danced. Anand had come on the last moment from RIT, Kurukshetra when the marriage party was leaving for Jamshedpur. I could invite only a limited number of guests from among my acquaintances in Hindustan Motors for reception because I couldn't have afforded it. Many kept on complaining for the same for a long time. It was held in the park created in front of Flat 4. Almost all the top executives of Hindustan Motors including Mrs. and Mr. SL Bhattar joined us and blessed Alpana and Rakesh. Yamuna was at her happiness peak.

Interestingly, I could clear the debts of the suppliers for the reception only after I got a chance to conduct a two sessions of 2-day course on 'Gear Manufacturing' for manufacturing engineers and managers of TELCO (Former Tata Motors) and got a payment of Rs 40,800 towards honorarium and other incidentals in June 1993. TELCO paid me Rs 10,000 per day against its norms of Rs 2400. The programme gave me a great confidence of conducting a seminar all alone, but I didn't pursue it much after I retired. I just conducted one on 'Gear Manufacturing' for the members of Calcutta Management Association but with just nominal remuneration. On June 28, 1994, I did one-day training on 'NC/CNC Technology' at TELCO's Management Training Centre and received a remuneration of Rs 11,750.

Rakesh left for US after few days of his marriage. Alpana accompanied and started a new life. She pretty soon got admitted for her MS in a university in Dallas.

### **To Taiwan, Japan and US**

The stamping die-sets for the panels of Ambassadors were very old. Many required replacements. It included even the die-sets of major skin panels such as roof, fenders, doors, bonnet or declid. Even McKinsey team had also suggested this investment.

Hindustan Motors had set a die manufacturing shop, but it served only for maintaining the old dies or repairing them. Technology of die manufacturing had gone very much advanced. Multi-axis computerized numerically controlled die manufacturing machine tools had replaced the mechanical tracing of the forms, curves and contours of the die0sets improving the quality of the manufacture.

I had been exploring the possibility of outsourcing of manufacturing of sheet metal stamping die tools both locally in India as well as with foreign manufacturers. Unfortunately, India had not been able to build the capability as well as capacity of manufacturing die tools that could have helped bringing in new car models or new platforms more frequently. For any new platform of a car model, it required then to invest about Rs 300-400 crore in new die tools that are dedicated. Among the countries that had good capabilities, Taiwan was one.

Taiwan, a small country with no big automakers, had built a pretty good capability for die manufacturing. Ogihara and Miyazu were the biggest names in Japan.

As General Manager –Technical Services I went in September 1993 to Taiwan and Japan along with a senior colleague of mine Mr. TK Guha to explore the possibilities of getting manufactured some of the die-sets for some of the major Ambassador sheet metal skin panels.

At Bangkok Airport, Surendra Rai of Bodarhi and his wife had come to see us. We visited Thai International Die Making Co., a Japanese die manufacturing company near Bangkok in Thailand too. I wondered why in India the entrepreneurs in tools and dies didn't go for some technical collaboration with Japanese die makers. Why didn't the Indian automobile manufacturers encourage some of its vendors to set up the independent facility?

We had to stop for a night in Hong Kong for taking the visa for Taiwan. We had to go to one Lippo Centre building on the Hong Kong side for that. We went pretty early to avoid any miss, particularly due to queue of visitors to Taiwan. It took some 4 hours.

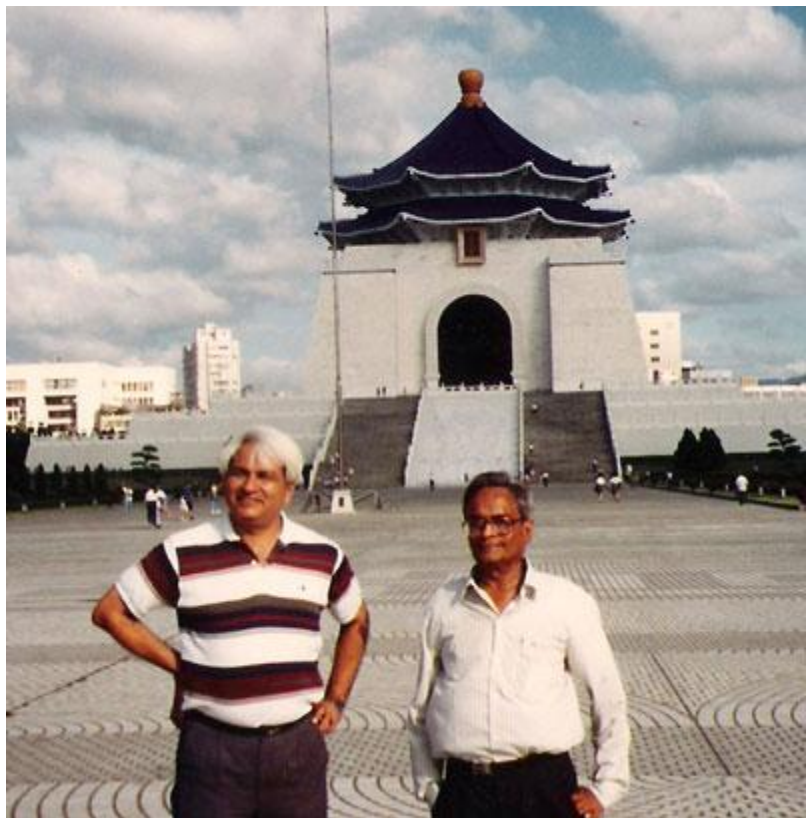
In Taipei, we visited the die and tooling division of Chinese Automobile Company, FT Tooling industrial Co, and China Ogihara. Vincent Ko of FT Tooling had been visiting me in Calcutta. On our last day in Taipei Vincent took us for sightseeing, a dam with beautiful hills, the memorial of Chang-kai-sake, and then a park with miniature buildings, all the wonders of the world including Taj Mhal. We did see all on a toy train.



Visiting FT Tooling Company, Taiwan



At a water reservoir near Taipei, Taiwan



With Mr. TH Guha Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial, Taipei, Taiwan

From Taipei, we flew to Osaka in Japan and then to Hiroshima from Shinkari-sen Railway Station in Osaka. In Hiroshima, we visited a sheet metal stamping plant that was using laser cutting to eliminate trimming and piercing out of pressing steps of sheet metal panels and thus to cut down the number of die-sets required for a panel..



While in Tokyo, we visited Miyazu and Ogihara that were the most known die manufacturers and were supplying world over to automobile companies. Both were pioneers and had huge facilities.

Interestingly, later on, I prepared a project report for setting up a die manufacturing company for CK Birla Group. A number of times, I suggested to pull out all the facilities of the tool room, the die shops and pattern shops of the Uttarpara Plant, shift to a new location and set up an independent tooling manufacturing company. Even CK Birla agreed but could not be daring enough to get it executed. It would have avoided a huge faculty going waste and remaining unutilized.

TK Guha returned on September 17, 1993. As planned, Yamuna joined me in Tokyo. We had a plan to go to Rakesh in Fortworth, Dallas. She travelled alone from Calcutta by Air India flight. I was a little worried but Yamuna had managed the travel formalities very well. I received her at Narita. Yamuna could get only a night and two days in Japan. But we went around Ginza in Tokyo and did some shopping too in some of the biggest shopping centres such as Takasimaya and Matsuzakaya.



Yamuna in Ginza, Tokyo in 1993

Rakesh had arranged for the air tickets for both of us from Tokyo onwards. That came very cheap rather almost free, as he was then working for American Airlines. But the cheap tickets had its drawbacks too. At Tokyo airports, we had to wait anxiously to know if we would travel by that flight that day. But once cleared, it was a first time and perhaps the last time we availed and enjoyed the facilities of the first class travel by air. I still remember the grandmas like airhostesses of American Airlines. I felt bad about it even in presence of Yamuna, as I was

younger then. Rakesh was present at San Jose International Airport to receive and assist us. We took a flight from San Jose to Dallas Fortworth, where Alpana was waiting to receive us. For the first time, I could realize that even certain amount of inconveniences can be a pleasure.



In Rakesh's Apartment in Fortworth



Me and Yamuna with Alpana in the library of Texas University, Arlington in 1993

My short stay of perhaps 2-3 days with Rakesh and Alpana became memorable for many reasons. Alpana took me to Texas University at

Arlington where I spent few hours in its library. I could dig out some relevant and interesting materials on quality management that was my pet subject at that time. Alpana could get me some articles from 'Quality Progress' printed for me. Rakesh kept on sending a lot of printed material and books too. His gift of Ford's literatures on quality that it used for training its employees is still my most valued collection in my library at residence in Noida. Rakesh also took us to the place where JF Kennedy got shot by his assassin.



With Yamuna in front of the building where JFKennedy Got Assasinated

While Yamuna stayed back, I came back to India via Frankfurt, where I had visited a laser equipment manufacturer. I had a real bad experience at Fort Worth Airport when a cop stopped



me and took me in a booth. It had never happened in whole of my travelling life. I tried to explain. I showed him the passports and the number of countries I had visited till that time on company business. As I guess he got suspicious as Rakesh took a photograph of me while coming in.

Yamuna spent about three months in Dallas with Rakesh in 1993. Rakesh and Alpana took Yamuna to many places including Niagara Falls. She also visited Rajshree, the daughter of Diwakar Singh in New Jersey, where her husband and son of my educationist friend Yamuna Prasad Singh and Shanti Singh of Salt Lake was working with AT&T. Yamuna could also go and meet Dr. Onkar Singh and his wife, Shakuntala in Baltimore. Onkar is the younger brother of Kamakhya.



Left:Yamuna at Niagara Fall Right:With Family of Anil and Rajshree

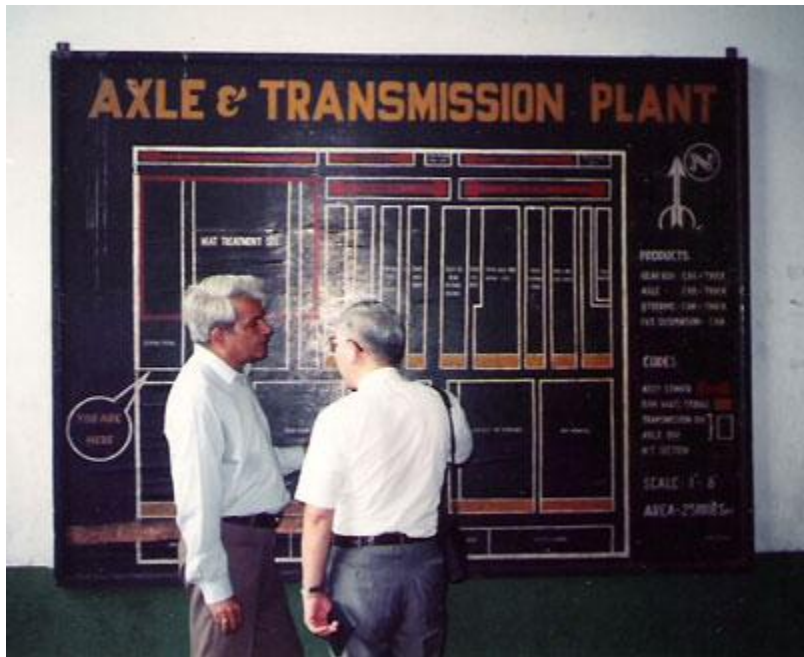
Rajesh met an accident in BIT, Mesra. While playing football he fractured his leg. His friends one day brought him to Himd Motors. Yamuna was away. I had to take care of Rajesh with Syamal.

Yamuna returned finally on December 24, 1993 and I got back my peace of mind again..





T- With Japanese guests at Tajmahal B- at HM factory



With a guest in Axle Plant

## Back in Corporate Project Planning Again

I had a dream of getting the reign of Indore plant that I had helped in setting up, as Mr. RC Rath was no more there.. I pleaded for that option too. But as expected that didn't come. The management had decided to favour someone else. I felt bad but I would have taken lessons from the various decisions that the top management had taken earlier. I hadn't agreed to become the chief of Mechanical Division. The management carried on with the same organizational set up for more than a year or so.

The HM management then underwent an organization change in end 1993. Mr. CK Birla brought in Mr. A Sankara Narayana who had replaced RK Daga at EED, Chennai as president-operations in November 1993. Mr. ML Pachisia got shifted to the head office for taking care of new businesses of CK Group. I tried to be in sync with the new management. It went on well for some months. Unfortunately I couldn't get the inkling of the plans of the top management that at that time constituted of Mr. CK Birla and A Sankara Narayanan. Mr. CK Birla used SL Bhatler to facilitate the smooth transfer of power to Sankara Narayanan. One day Mr. SL Bhatler offered me one of the two options, a post of head of operation of a small ancillary unit of CK Group in Calcutta itself or shift to corporate project planning with Mr. GC Bansal. I decided for the corporate planning though I knew that Mr. Bansal was already having his close relative Mittal there as his assistant. I knew it would be difficult to work even in corporate planning. On May29, 1994, I came back to corporate project planning again to work for Mr. GC Bansal. But this time, it was Mr. ML Pachisia, who was effectively looking after the corporate project planning work that dealt with new business for CK Group.

One more time I got mentally tortured and questioned my decision to keep on continuing with Hindustan Motors. But at 55 it was too late to find a suitable opening in some other organization.

At least that's what everyone who loved me, my knowledge and sincerity, told me. I thought for a while and consoled myself, why I should bother now about Hindustan Motors when I had offered my services but it didn't use it.

Later on, I could take solace and got busy with my work both professional and personal. I consider myself today to be lucky to have survived the mental torture of the company politics of Hindustan Motors. I had seen many senior executives such as BM Sharda, DC Lahoty, NK Birla, RC Rath, NK Shukla, and finally SN Chaturvedi to succumb during my time itself. Somewhere the responsibility for those deaths in harness to certain extent must go the politics at work. In the same manner, many highly respected executives such as SN Murarka couldn't get their due rewards and continued in same position till last as I did. Others like RK Daga or OP Khanna had to leave. RK Daga with his blue blood could certainly have replaced Mr. SL Bhatner. Unfortunately, SL Bhatner was not good in promoting the right persons. He went by his own personal considerations. HM would have done well with the right people policy and survived the onslaught of the new comers. Mr. Bhatner was such a nice man but he didn't prove to be a good mentor. If he could have talked to me about my long hairs that would not have been liked by CK Birla, he could have also warned me against my other shortcoming, my short temper. Over the years I could not control my sudden outbursts of anger. And naturally my family members and other near one tolerated it, but naturally it was not a trait that could be accommodated in high position of a company.

Indore plant had already set up its manufacturing facilities for Isuzu transmissions and engines. The facility was flexible. Hindustan Motors had handed over the land and building at Halol Vadodara to General Motors. It was strange that both NK Birla and RC Rath couldn't survive for long.

Hindustan Motors still had aspirations to be in car business as a major player. It had started talking with many of the Japanese and South Korean car manufacturers, Mr. SL Bhatner had told me about the company's interest in collaborating with Subaru. In my new job I started with Subaru team. I took them to Godrej and Bharat Gears in Bombay and Engine Transmission Plant that Hindustan Motors had set up in Indore to show them the capability of Indian vendors and HM's planning and execution. Pretty soon Mitsubishi also visited us and showed interest in working with Hindustan Motors for collaborating for manufacturing of its cars. Gradually I got totally involved in that.

Besides working for the collaborations with auto companies, I did help other companies of CK Group. In turn, I got an extensive exposure to auto components sector. I visited almost all major auto components manufacturers. Many knew me personally and gave a lot of respect but the image of Hindustan Motors and its management was really poor.

Finally, Hindustan Motors zeroed on Mitsubishi Motors of Japan. HM was trying to set up a new plant for car manufacturing at Chennai. I worked on both the small car as well as the compact one. The small car was to compete with Maruti 800. The small car project was planned to be located in Indore. I had to prepare various options for manufacturing and its investment estimates. To me the location could also be Hind Motor, Calcutta because of its already existing facilities. But naturally the work culture of Hind Motor went against it. CK Birla as well as Mr.

SL Bhatte didn't agree. Chennai remained the best choice with an HM plant already there and a lot of land once acquired by late BM Birla was available. Yokota and Kaneki of Mitsubishi Motors were the main contact persons for this project. Kaneki was technically sound and had a lot of knowledge about sheet metal side, particularly of paint facilities of the business for small volume plant. Mitsubishi had small volume plants in all the south East Asian countries such as Thailand, Philippine, and Indonesia.

Mr. ML Pachisia used me also for a deal under consideration then for a CK Birla company to collaborate with LG Electronics for white goods. I visited the Changwon plant of LG in Pusan between May 12 and May 19, 1995 along with a group of technocrats drawn from CK's other companies. I was to help the team in preparing the capital investment estimate based on the planned in-house manufacturing facilities.



With Mehta and Saboo





Periwal, Me, Ganesh and Park



With Mehta, Periwal at LG Electronics Pushan Plant

One of the most memorable parts of this LG visit to South Korea was an outing to the *Kyongju* Historic Areas on a Sunday. It is a world heritage centre and very well preserved. I felt proud of our heritage going back to Buddhist days that covered the whole of East Asia. Some of those Buddha statues in stones must have been carved by some sculptors from India. South Korea also had some relation with Ayodhya. And their popular Kimchi must have an origin in India.

Somehow, the negotiations with LG Electronics for a joint venture in India with CK Group of companies couldn't materialize. LG Electronics came on its own in India and is doing wonderfully well.

While returning from Pushan, in Seoul I had a discussion with the representatives of Kia Motors on May 20, 1995. Earlier I had a plan to visit Kia Plant, but Kia was not ready because of a labour problem. Mr. Pachisia wanted me to keep them engaged for a tie-up as contingency

strategy. From Seoul, I travelled to Changi Airport in Singapore and came to Jakarta. Mr. Kaneki of Mitsubishi met me at Jakarta Airport after an eager wait of two hours. His flight from Tokyo was late. Kaneki had arranged and so accompanied me to the visits of Mitsubishi plants in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and Jakarta in Indonesia to study the low volume production system that it used. Out of all the plants, Proton of Malaysia was like the Maruti before our government disinvested to make it a Suzuki plant. Proton had ambitious plans with its own product development. Mitsubishi was a minor shareholder. Kaneki or his bosses had managed my visit to Proton on personal basis. Plants in Jakarta were low volume plants and were run by Mitsubishi. The visit was really informative in many ways. I could see South East Asian countries changing very fast. Its manufacturing sector was growing significantly. Unfortunately India missed to cash on the potential of manufacturing miracle.

1995 was pretty busy year for me. I worked for both the projects with Mitsubishi as well as LG Electronics. I went three-four times to Tokyo for meetings with Mitsubishi Motors. In one of the visit Mr. Pachisia had taken MP Poddar also. It was perhaps a bonus for his loyalty to Mr. Pachisia. Hindustan Motors was trying to get Mitsubishi buy some stake in Hindustan Motors. HM could not negotiate the price of its share that it expected Mitsubishi to pay. It also didn't agree to take Mitsubishi on its board. I suggested the management to have some manufacturing tie ups with MM for Pithampur plant. But unfortunately HM was not decisive. CK wanted everything free.

I kept on visiting Indore plant with Mitsubishi team. And every time I got reminded that I would have been the boss of this place. I remember clearly the visit with Mr. Okamoto, a senior executive of Mitsubishi Motors. Okamoto kept on talking high about the selection of the machine tools and equipment for the manufacturing. However, he was critical of the layout with a lot of unused spaces that I also had objected. Okamoto was technically very sound. He respected my views. I was surprised when he told me about their business plans with Mahindra and Mahindra and sought my opinion. Okamoto had worked as consultant with a power tiller company near Bangalore. He had many sweet memories of the time. I could know all that, as I was in Bangalore when the whole of the management team of VST Power Tiller Company came to meet him in Oberoi there.

In 1996 between July 14 and 23, I visited Mitsubishi alone for the first time to finalize the manufacturing plans and investment for the project report and also saw two of its plant at Okayama and Okazaki. From Haneda airport in Tokyo, Okayama was about an hour and twenty minutes flight. The Mitsubishi plant was at Mizushima with paddy fields all around and from Okayama airport we had to travel by car. Mizushima plant was a showcase of the thrust that Japanese put on maintenance. In its stamping shop, they showed me a press line of 35 years that was producing the world class sheet metal panels. After the Mizushima plant visit, we left for Okazaki and had to change Shinkansen, the Japanese bullet train thrice to reach Meitetsu Okazaki hotel. I spent next four days at Okazaki for intensive meetings with the engineers and managers of Mitsubishi Motors for every facility such as dies, presses, body fixtures and transfer, weld, body trim and assembly and testing as well as major engine and transaxle components that a new automotive plant requires. While returning I visited Manila, the capital of Philippines and went to see three auto components plants- Asia transmission Co., Yazaki, a

harness manufacturing facility and a forge plant besides the manufacturing plant of Mitsubishi. All the three plants were small in size but producing world class quality components.

Okamoto came for the Auto Expo too where Hindustan Motors had exhibited the small car Minica that would have competed with Maruti 800. I kept on working on finalizing the project reports with many options.

### **Last Visit to Mitsubishi Motors, Japan**

I visited Japan and Mitsubishi Motors last time accompanying CK Birla in September 9-11, 1996. I went earlier and arranged all the meetings of Hindustan Motors executives with the chairman and President of Mitsubishi Motors Co. The Chairman of MMC hosted a dinner at Kaitoukaku, the exclusive Mitsubishi Club. We also visited Mitsubishi Mizushima plant. Mr. ML Pachisia and Sankara Narayanan also participated in the meetings.

I had accompanied CK Birla on the return trip, but I never tried to go closer to CK and ask any personal favour. That had been my way of professional relations with bosses all along. Whatever I attained, it was because of my ability to carry out my assignment efficiently and effectively. I still believe Hindustan Motors and particularly its bosses couldn't use me full to my capability. I didn't learn the company politics in my life. That remained my drawback.









Photos during CK Birla's visit to Mitsubishi Motors

Ultimately, HM dropped the idea of investing for the small car and I consider missed the chance to be in the automobile game. Chennai was the location of the compact car, 'Lancer'

Ultimately, Mr. Sankara Narayanan and later on Santanam took over the total task of working with Mitsubishi Motors and implementing the project at Chennai. Interestingly, Hindustan Motors launched Mitsubishi Lancer. But the name of Hindustan Motors never got associated with Lancer or other Mitsubishi products that came out of Chennai plant.

### **AJIRA- Salt Lake Becomes Home**

As advised by Mr. SL Bhattar I moved out of Flat 4 to AJIRA in Salt Lake in December 1996. It got me the benefit of house rent allowance that was a handsome amount. It was convenient for me too. For most of the days, I was to attend my office in Birla Building, RN Mukherji Road in Calcutta. Only on Sundays I visited Hind Motor and worked from my office there. GC Bansal also attended the office along with the technical staffs of corporate planning department. Mr. Bansal had a bungalow in the residential complex of Hind Motor. Saturday was the weekly holiday for the factory, whereas the head office in Calcutta enjoyed two days off.

I still remember a meeting of CK Birla that he used to hold while visiting Hind Motor plant. I was still General Manager-Technical Services. CK was looking into a list. He suddenly said, "Mr. Jhavar! You are also getting 58 soon." The company had started retiring its employees at 58. Mr. Jhavar blushed and didn't say anything. However, I remarked, "Sir, as the birth date is recorded, one day we all are going to reach 58." For many years after getting in Hindustan Motors, most of the senior executives including me used to think that HM would retain us for life long and there would not be any retirement for us. Alas, we were wrong. Was it because new generation had taken the control of the family organization? Mr. CK Birla never believed in his grandfather's policies. He had engaged all new sets of executives at the top of the affairs of Hindustan Motors.

In 1995-96, I kept on arranging grand farewells for my senior colleagues, who were retiring and making speeches about the contributions of those persons. I did that as the new top management at Hindustan Motors was not aware of the contributions that the old-timers had made to bring the company up to that level. Unfortunately I didn't get one when I retired. Perhaps I was the only to be blamed for that to happen. No one came to know of my retirement.

In 1997, I became 58 and preferred to retire rather than seeking extension. I received the letter for retirement on May 20, 1997 ending all my false dreams of 35+ years of serving a company of repute. I had kept on preaching my subordinates to consider it as one's own and work hard. I sent an acceptance letter to Mr. A Sankara Narayanan. Mr. GC Bansal didn't do anything to retain me on his own. I never approached higher ups.

Mr. GC Bansal was, as usual, very inquisitive about knowing what I was going to do after retirement. I told Mr. Bansal that I would be living near the house that he had bought. I didn't personally meet any of the persons at the top management with whom I had worked and knew intimately. I felt very sore about the way they had treated me. I still feel it would have been prudent for them to call me for a meeting when they had come to know about my retirement. But as usual the people don't behave the way you want them to do.

It was a Sunday June 28, 1997, when I attended my office in Hind Motor factory for the last time and conveyed to my secretary and my staff that they would not find me any more in Hindustan Motors. They felt bad. Some even cried with tears rolling out of their eyes, but that was my way. On that day I went to the house of KP Bose, my secretary in Konnagar and took a cup of tea before requesting him to get all paper formalities for release and final payments done in such way that I wouldn't be required to come again to the factory. I never went back. On the way I went to Mr. Bansal's Bungalow to say the goodbye and enquire about his health, he was not there.

## **Rajesh Marriage**

After passing out from BIT, Mesra, Rajesh joined Tata Tinplate in Jamshedpur. Rajesh had appeared and cleared GRE and TOEFEL I wanted him to go to US, as Rakesh was already working there. I had saved sufficient dollars out of my allowances for the foreign visits for that purpose too. But Rajesh didn't show any interest in going to USA for higher education then, though his scores could have gotten fairly good universities.

In early 1996, Rajesh shifted to Calcutta after getting a marketing job with Tata Elxsi. He had to go out station very frequently. It was troublesome to do that from Hind Motor. And Rajesh decided to move to Salt Lake and live in AJIRA, the house we had built. Yamuna went into the search of a good match for Rajesh. Fathers of many brides approached and visited us. But Rajesh was perhaps not ready for the marriage yet.

During the same period, we received a bio-data of the daughter of Janardan Sharma through one Shri Pandey of Ranchi. I was surprised when I could recollect that he was the same Janardan

who was in my own batch in IIT, Kharagpur. I knew him as he was from Bihar. Janardan was very much introvert. He attended some common classes with me in the first year. He was the topper of mining engineering batch. He was in Radha Krishnan Hall, the hall of residence next to Rajendra Prasad Hall. I showed my interest and sent message inviting him. He visited us in Salt Lake. We agreed to go ahead. Janardan came again after few days and insisted on seeing Rajesh in his Tata Elexi office. Perhaps he wanted to ensure if Rajesh is really engaged. We knew Rajesh wouldn't have agreed if we had asked him. On Yamuna's insistence I took Janardan to Rajesh's office. Rajesh met Janardan with all courtesy. Janardan liked Rajesh. We agreed for the marriage. Rajesh and Shephali started talking on phone and meeting outside. We met Shephali in Taj Bengal Hotel on September 23, 1996. I had sent Rajesh to bring her. We were waiting in the lounge. Interestingly I had given a date that was the previous day. But I had forgotten.



The Photograph that was given before marriage

Today I could appreciate the embarrassment Shephali would have faced with her friends. However either Shephali would have forgiven me or Rajesh would have convinced her. She came. We really liked her and gave a token gift of a dress from Khajana, the gift shop in Taj Bengal. She hesitated to take it but then agreed when Yamuna convinced, “Even if you decide in negative, it doesn’t matter. After all, you are the daughter of a friend. We can always give you a gift.”





With Janardan and his relatives at Tilak

Pretty soon we went ahead with a simple engagement function on December 3, 1996 in Salt Lake. All functions were organized on very low key. I invited only very few relatives for the marriage. The rogue tenant in the first floor of AJIRA had created a nightmarish situation. Fortunately, everything went on well.



Nand Kishore Chacha and Chandramani Mama during Rajesh Marriage

The marriage party went to Sitarampur near Asansol by road. Anand had come well in advance. Rakesh and Alpana also joined. Some very close relatives and acquaintances attended the marriage functions. I could meet some old friends such as Prakash Singh and Ramnathan.



At Sitarampur near Asansol on Rajesh-Shephali, 1997







Shephali and Rajesh during Marriage, 1997

We held the reception at Misra, the West Bengal government guest house near AJIRA. I had called only limited number of guests connected with Hindustan Motors. Some guests were from the neighbourhood in Salt Lake including Dilip Gupta, the Mayor of Bidhannagar Municipality. From among the senior executives of HM, Mr. SP Singhi came for reception.



Mr. SP Singhi at the reception of marriage of Rajesh and Shephali

It was the last function that I had organized.

1997 was an important landmark of my life. I left Hindustan Motors Ltd. after working for it for almost 36 years. Rajesh got married. I had gifted the couple the air tickets for Kathmandu for their honeymoon break. And I shifted to Noida leaving newlywed Rajesh-Shephali behind in Salt Lake.





A Dipawali Puja at Ajira

I had completed the book, 'Latest Trends in Automobile Manufacturing', but could get only few copies through Photostat. It couldn't go for commercial distribution in industry, as it happened with the book on gear manufacturing. I had really worked hard for that. It was perhaps only documentation available on all the aspects of the subject of automobile manufacturing. It would have been very useful for manufacturing engineers joining auto sector. I had shown some chapters to my Japanese friends during my visits there. They got it translated in Japanese without asking me. They all appreciated my endeavour. Tamal Mukherji and Bag, the two of my draftsmen of the corporate project planning helped me in preparing the illustrations for all my books. However, it is now on my website, 'www.drishtikona.com'.

And once in a while, I get an email as one given below from a professor in far distant country on August 28, 2011, that makes me happy and I get a satisfaction of a sort. At least I did something different. The professor picked it from my writing on my website, [www.drishtikona.com](http://www.drishtikona.com).

Dear mr. Sharma,

I was impressed about your professional career and knowledge, especially in the field of gear manufacturing.

I am a full professor at University of Split, Croatia and writing a book "Gears and gear drives". Would you like to allow me to insert some parts of your paper "AN OVERVIEW OF GEAR MANUFACTURING PROCESSES" in my book. It is so good paper! I should be very grateful.

With best regards

Damir Jelaska

Anand had come on May 16, 1997 from USA. He was a big help. He did help a lot in completing the typing, formatting and printing of the book too with some of my subordinates who loved me and helped me. I remember when I had reached AJIRA in Salt Lake for Dipawali in 1997 from New Delhi. I had a letter from Bajaj Auto Ltd. with a draft of Rs 5000 waiting for sending a copy

of 'Latest Trends in Automobile Manufacturing'. I sent them one. But I didn't pursue the task of getting prepared more copies and selling them.

And when Yamuna sometimes asks if we have done something worthwhile for others while working in Hindustan Motors, I ponder over and answers in affirmative. One of that was the assistance that I provided to the family of Braj Raj Rai of Jaso after his sudden demise in Hindustan Motors. I could influence Mr. NK Birla who was running the show at that time. I could get the most from the company what Lalita Bhabhi, wife of Late BR Rai and elder son wished. The most demanding of the wishes was an almost new Ambassador replacing his very old Landmaster, besides the monetary exgratias from the company.

I could contribute in the very similar manner to the wishes of Mrs. Diwakar Singh and his son after the untimely death of Diwakar suffering from throat cancer. I helped Diwakar in getting his younger daughter married with an IITian son of Mr. Jharkhandey Singh of Birlapur whom I knew.

We did also help Yamuna's sister who was married in Budhailaa near Nawanagar in getting her eldest daughter married. In 1995, we gave Rs 60,000 in two installments through drafts. But I had lost temper when they had approached me third time for additional amount. However, the marriage happened.

We tried to help others too in different means though I hardly found anyone satisfied with what we did and obliged extending some assistance that they could provide to us. My biggest satisfaction comes from the employment that I could provide to some, and as a result of that they could bring up their children who are well educated and well placed in life.

### **Harig Crankshafts after HM**

In 1996, I had started thinking seriously and looking for some job that could engage me after my retirement in 1997. Mr. LN Jhavar, my colleague in Hindustan Motors after retirement had joined an industrial house in Nagpur. The group was setting up a big foundry and had a plan of going in a big way for finish machining auto components such as engine cylinder heads and cylinder blocks too. The Managing Director talked to me on phone and invited me for a meeting. I went there, saw the plant and presented them with a business plan that they liked. They wanted me to join them. They paid for the air flight, hotel accommodation and a consultation fee of Rs 10,000.

In one of my regular visits to New Delhi I had met Deshbir Singh too. He insisted me to join him. However I kept it pending till they called me again for discussing their business plan. I went and spent a day with them advising them many improvements in manufacturing strategies. Interestingly, for the visit I got paid a consultation fee of Rs 10,000. In my search for the engagements, I also met the MD of Lohia Machines too through ABC Consultants. I didn't like the person. I collected the airfare and returned. And those are not the only. I explored many avenues to remain as free lance consultants. I worked as part time consultant with Mr. Banerji of Uttarpara who was basically a brickfield owner, but wished to go for manufacturing automated

plant for making bricks. I also tried to work as retainer for some machine tools companies of Germany and Japan. Perhaps it was too late for me to go for it.

The years of 1995-97 were turbulent for me. I had to face and overcome many hurdles. I was retiring. I was fighting a legal nerve-breaking battle with my unscrupulous tenant, Manohar Lal Fomra, who had been occupying the first floor of AJIRA. I was preparing for the marriage for Rajesh and Shephali singlehandedly. I was searching for an alternative engagement for me for a life good enough after working for a little short of 4 decades with one company. And more importantly I was completing my book, 'Latest Trends in Automobile Manufacturing'.

I had decided to join Deshbir Singh's Harig Crankshafts, as I found the whole family very friendly. But before leaving Calcutta I arranged the marriage of Rajesh.

Just after the marriage of Rajesh with Shephali on May 30, 1997, Anand persuaded me to shift to New Delhi to join Harig Crankshafts as President.



Me, Nilmani Sinha, Deshbir Singh, Harig Crankshafts Ltd, Noida

Nilmani Sinha, who was three years senior to me from IIT, Kharagpur and had been in HM too with me, had facilitated my joining Harig Crankshafts. I came to Noida. Surprisingly, I heard the news of the death of Mr. GC Bansal in just months after I left Hindustan Motors. Mr. GC Bansal was suffering for some years. He had to undergo dialysis regularly. Mrs. Bansal came to Noida to live in the house that he had bought. It is very near to my residence.



In Office as President, Harig Crankshafts Ltd. Noida

Harig crankshafts Ltd was a much smaller manufacturing company. I had joined it just after a long labour dispute and strike in which a number of workmen were suspended and sacked. I focused on cutting down the huge dead inventories of raw materials, brought about many technical improvements and made many layout changes to improve productivity. Some indigenous low cost automation equipment also got added. The company was not in position to go for investment in capital equipment. Small companies need totally different type of management skills. There are not many support services. One's technical knowledge is on real test almost always.

It went on well. I succeeded, but it stressed me a lot. Some company politics also troubled me. Deshbir had given me full freedom and stopped coming to the factory.





Myself and Deshbir Singh at Harig Crankshafts



With Deshbir



In a Function at Harig Group's Ghaziabad Plant



Manju Deshbir Singh and Yamuna at Harig Crankshafts



Yamuna with Officers of HR department, Harig Crankshafts, Noida



Me and Yamuna with Manju Deshbir Singh in Harig, Ghaziabad

Deshbir wanted me to live in Delhi. But the plant of Harig Crankshafts was in Phase II of Noida. I stayed for a month at India Habitant Centre, New Delhi. When Yamuna joined me, we lived for few days in a guest house in Noida. In the meantime Harig Crankshafts searched a good flat for us. For almost one year we lived in the rented flat in sector 30. Rajesh and Shephali visited us there.





In rented residence in Sector 30, Noida

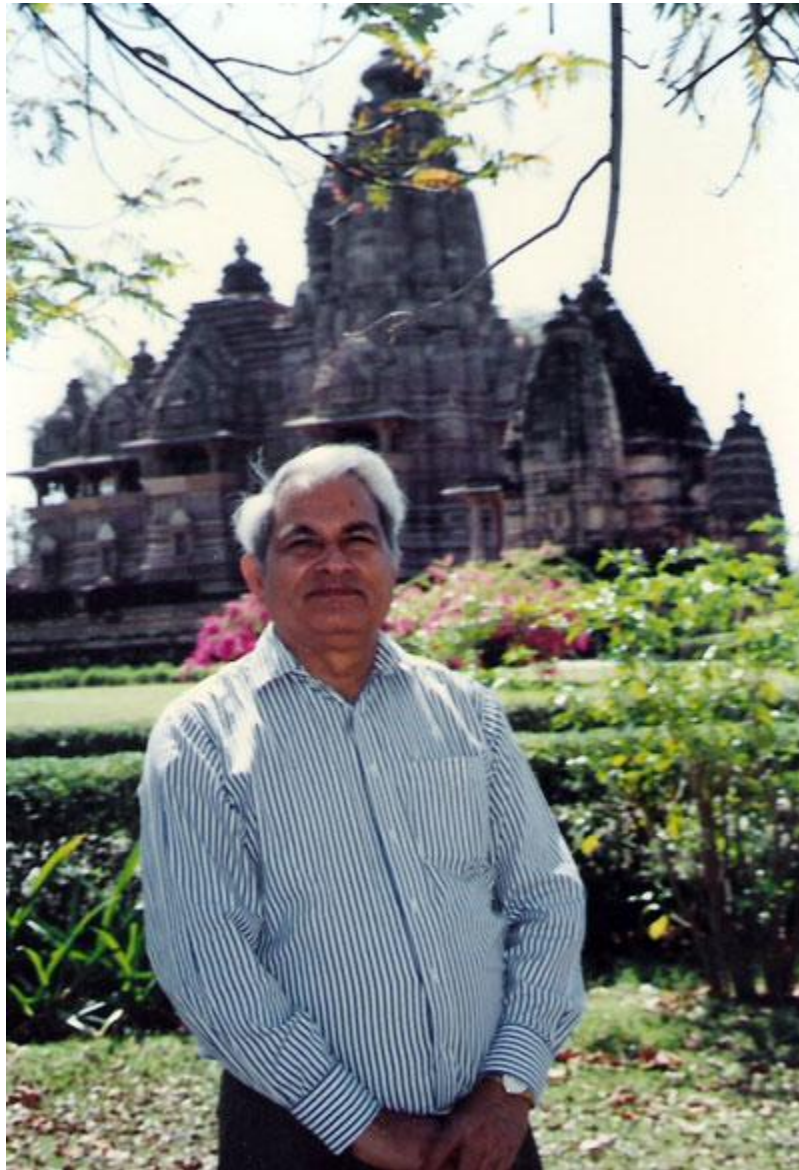
My respected Chandramani Mama also came with Surendra, who is his youngest son and is an advocate in Sasaram. It was the day before the Holi in 1998. We were leaving for a holiday to Khajuraho. We made arrangement for their convenient stay and left for Khajuraho as Mamaji asked me not to cancel it. Khajuraho was a great experience. It was a full moon night and we saw the main temples of Khajuraho as emerging from mother earth as the full moon gradually came up in the sky.





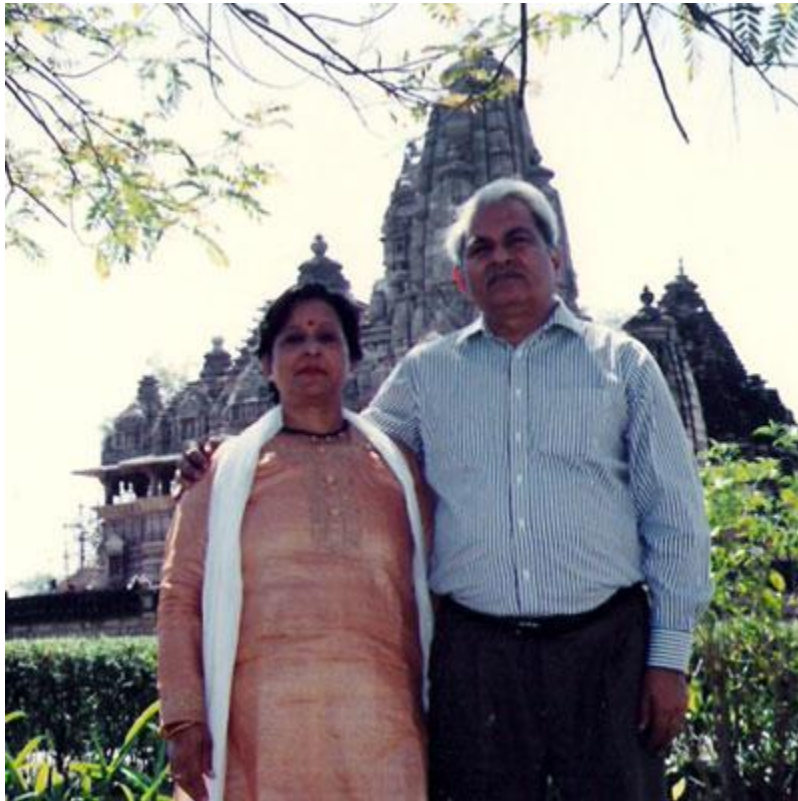


Yamuna with Nandi in Khajuraho

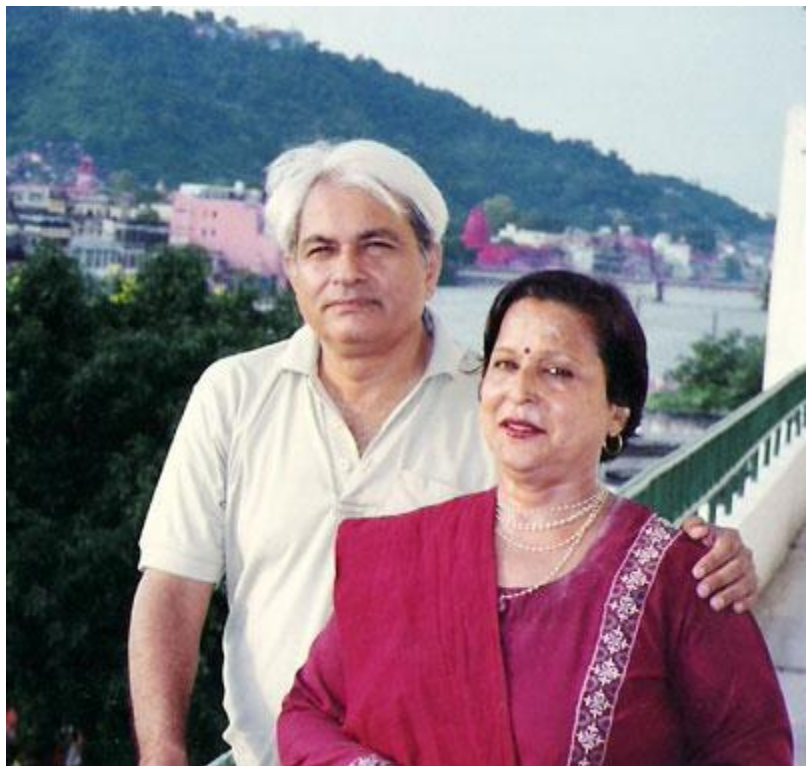


In Kijuraho

KK Mangal and the family made our shift to Noida lively with regular visits. We went out also to Hardwar and Rishikesh together. But for Mangal, I would not have perhaps decided to come to live in Noida. Unfortunately, Mangal is no more. He suffered a lot and died of cancer. That had been the biggest loss for me.



At Khajuraho, 1998



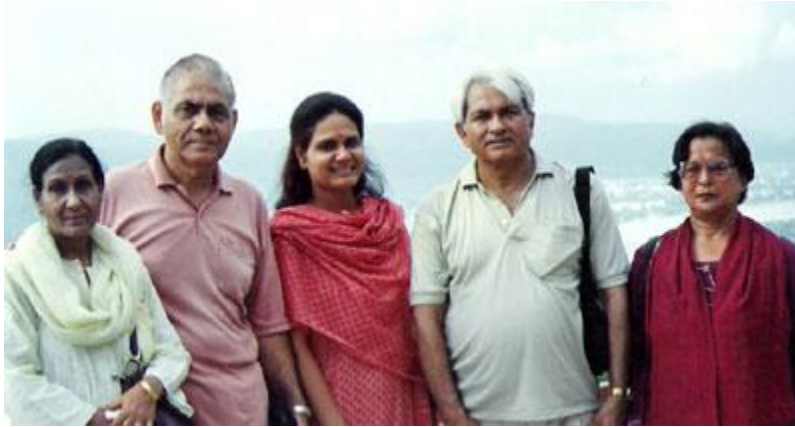
At Haridwar from Tourist Bunglow





Mangals in the rented residence in Sector 30, 1997





From L: Mrs and Mr. Mangal, Saloni, me and Yamuna in Rishikesh

Our relation with the landlord got shore. Khorana, the landlord of the rented house had started troubling us in many ways. Yamuna decided to buy a house in Noida, though we already had a house in Salt Lake, Calcutta. She started the long search. Finally we zeroed on and we moved to A-54 Sector 41 on June 14, 1998. It was spacious and well located. In one page of his diary in year 1965, Lakshmi Baba had expressed his wish of building a house in a town and also mentioned that it was just a dream hard to realize with so poor financial condition of the family at that time. What we have been able to do is only because of his blessings.

KK Mangal who was working for DCM Toyota in those days was the big help in the selection and registration of the house. Yamuna went to Salt Lake and arranged to get all of our FDs and other saving redeemed to pay for it. Perhaps for the first time in our life we had seen a transaction of that huge money. We had to pay a lot of money in cash to the landlord, who was a retired officer from army.



A-54, Sector 41, Noida, the residence since June 1998

Rajesh was at that time working with Tata Elexi, Calcutta and living with Shephali in AJIRA. I had left the Ambassador car given by HM for him and one of my cousins to assist him in household. But Rajesh then decided to go for higher education in US. I was surprised. I had been advising him for the same as soon as he had cleared his graduation. But every time he had expressed his earnest interest to be with us in India. His decision came at the time when we had bought the house in Noida using all the money that I had got from Hindustan Motors after retirement as well as the balance of money that I had in my saving account after the expenditure in Rajesh's marriage. We had also taken a huge amount in loan from Citi Bank and Standard Chartered Bank at pretty high interest in those days.

In the middle of 1999, Rajesh left Salt Lake, came to Noida, worked in a software company in Malviya Nagar for a month and then left for Hawaii for a MS course. At the time Shephali was working in Lok Nayak Hospital, New Delhi as intern. Janardan Sharma had provided the seed finance for Rajesh's education in US. I couldn't provide any financial help. I was not having any. I was living on the salary that Harig Crankshafts paid monthly. Further, I was paying a huge

amount in installment on the loan taken for the house in Noida. I had felt bad about the decision of Rajesh. It was the first time that I was not the party in decision making of my son. I couldn't even ask Rakesh to help Rajesh. Rakesh had also bought a house at that time. In spite of that, I had asked Rakesh to pay back the money that I had saved and kept with him for Noida house. He did. It was my mistake. I had asked Rakesh to pay back my money without appreciating his problems.



Alpana performs Satyanarayan Puja

Later on, I handed over my share of the inherited farm land in Pipra to Nand Kishore Chacha. Many of the relatives criticized me against my decision. But it helped me to be debt free. Moreover, I was hardly getting any returns from the land that my uncle was farming. The best annual revenue that I received over the years was just about what I could have got for one acre of land. Nand Kishore Chacha paid whatever he thought as the best price in installments as per his convenience. I never tried to get the best on my own.

Rakesh with Alpana and Kehsav visited Noida in November 1999, stayed with us for few days and left for Jamshedpur to be with Alpana's family for celebrating the beginning of a new millennium.

When Rakesh visited us in 1999, Shephali was living with us in Noida. I showed them around New Delhi. We all went to Agra, Brindaban and Fatehpur Sikri. I still remember the scare on the face of Shephali when in the premises of Akbar's tomb in Sikandara, some monkeys came near her. Over the years, the highway between Delhi and Agra has improved, but it is still nowhere near the standard of the express ways of western countries. India must exhibit its priority to make the ambience along the highways users-friendly. Keshav had come for the first time. We enjoyed his company everywhere we went and everything we did in those days. I had thought that they will stay with us on the day when a new millennium was starting on January 1, 2000. However, they had fixed up their programme in advance and I felt really about it. I had not expressed this to anyone but Yamuna could very well guess it.

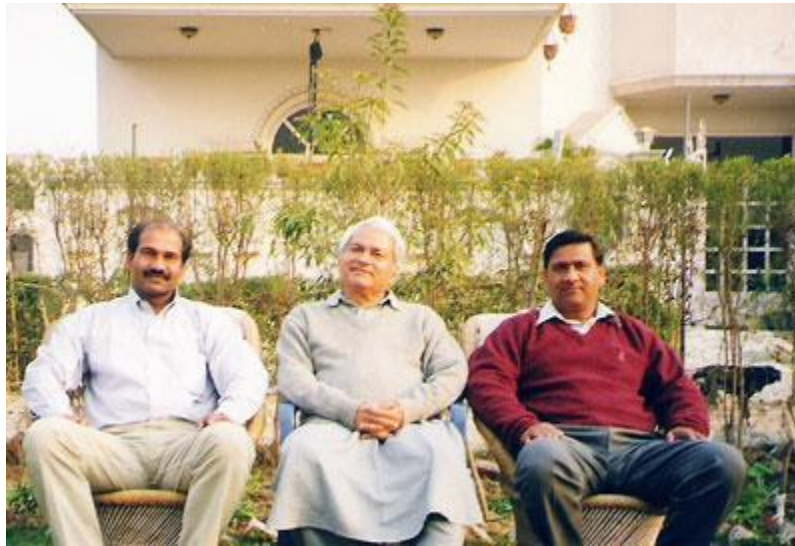




Keshav first time in Noida



In December 1999, I started getting some uneasiness that was finally diagnosed as heart trouble. One day in the premises of Harig Crankshafts, it became unbearable. I was admitted to Bhardwaj Hospital, as we knew Dr. Bhardwaj. Fortunately, Shephali, a doctor herself, was there to help. Finally, I was moved to Escorts Heart Institute that night itself. Yamuna informed Rakesh too. He rushed back cutting short his holidays from Jamshedpur and took the command of my treatment. I had to undergo open heart surgery. I could return only after fifteen days on January 14, 2000, Makar Sankranti. I didn't have sufficient money for my operation, as I had spent all my savings on the house A-54, Sector 41, Noida. Manju Deshbir Singh paid some money as advance. Rakesh and Alpana paid for my treatment and stay at Escorts. Rakesh left soon thereafter for US, but kept Alpana behind. Those were the nightmarish days for us, particularly Yamuna. In those days itself, one day I had asked one Dr. Mittal of Escorts to get me released soon. Thereupon, he said, "Uncle, you have work a lot. Why do not you enjoy the beauty of Mother Nature, the sky, the flying birds, and the blue sky? What is so big hurry?" Though I went back to work, but mentally I didn't find myself anytime thereafter the same what I used to be before operation. However, many from the extended family came to see me after operation.



With Alok and Ashok after surgery

In October, we went to Kolkata leaving Shephali at Noida. From there itself, I wrote a letter to Manju Deshbir Singh expressing my inability to continue working with Harig Crankshafts and so be relieved.

Let me confess it was also the changed attitude of Deshbir who had to listen to the man who looked after finance more and the financial constraints of Harig Crankshafts that made me to say goodbye to the job. It was difficult for me to carry on with the pay cheques getting delayed erratically every month.

Anand had called Rajesh from Hawaii, helped him in preparing for GRE and TOEFL And finally Rajesh had got admission in San Francisco University. Shephali left to be with Rajesh in US though he was still studying in San Francisco University for MS and living with Anand. Anand kept his commitment to help Rajesh and Shephali in pursuing their higher education and getting

settled in US. Shephali and Rajesh lived with Anand in his single bedroom apartment in Mansion Grove, Santa Clara. Even Anand went out of the way to help the delivery of Svanik. They would have had faced tough time. But as I was sick, they never told me about the trouble there in those days.

## Post-retirement

After getting relieved from Harig Crankshafts, I focused on completing the manuscript of 'Latest Trends in Machining' I tried a little to get it published, but failed. However, I sent some copies to Harig and Bharat Fritz Warner, Bangalore. They had paid for it handsomely too. Finally, I got it placed on my website, [dristikona.com](http://dristikona.com), where it is still available. I get a kick of satisfaction when some odd students of engineering, sometimes even from foreign countries, refers to my writings through e-mails. Now my website has 'Over the Years' also.

Yamuna kept on coaxing me to work. Some entrepreneurs came right up to the home with lucrative offers for getting me professionally engaged for setting up a manufacturing unit and kept on chasing me for accepting the offer. But I found it prudent to remain retired. I was physically and mentally not prepared for taking any assignment of responsibility.

### **Over the years after that, I still don't know if that was a right decision.**

We have been living in Noida for almost 14 years since June of 1997. There is hardly any social network of mine worth mention. Many an evening I feel really miserable. Rakesh had said once, "Pi! Only two types of persons call on you: one who wants to get a job through you or one who wants to get their daughter married to your son." I can no more help anyone in any of two now. Hardly anyone visits us at Noida.

My life has become simple. In the morning, I take a walk of about 5 kilometres as advised by my cardiologist. And I spend the rest of the day in reading and writing. I keep on buying some books regularly to keep myself updated with the developments in our country. However very lately I have stopped doing that too. Material available on web is good enough to keep me busy. I get up any time even as early as 3AM and sit on my table. I go through the latest news through websites of national newspapers and then the e-papers of some. With iPad gifted by Anand it has become very easy for me to read the e-paper both including those in Hindi too. I regularly glance through Hindustan Patna edition, besides the national dailies, Times of India, Hindustan Times, and Indian Express and the pink papers of the Times and Express groups. Perhaps the credit of my early rising goes to Lakshmi Baba and his emphasis for it in school days. Whatever I wrote earlier before the laptop days, it was all in that early hours. Laptop has made the life much easier for writing anything.

Between September, 15 -20, 2000, I with Yamuna went to the village home in Pipra and completed the religious task of a son of the family by performing shradh and pind-dan in Gaya in Pitripaksh for our ancestors. Along with Nand Kishore Chacha and Chachi, we travelled from Pipra, visited Varanasi and then Gaya to perform the rituals. As per the practice, we started with offering of pinds at home in Pipra, and then on the boundary of the village. Similar offerings were done in a place in Varanasi and in one place on the bank of a river on the way to Gaya.

Main offerings were in many places earmarked for the purpose in Gaya. The most important ones were in the premises of Vishnupad temple, on the river bed of Falgou with sand pind as practised, and at the Pretshila.

While returning, we visited Buddha Gaya too where Gautama Buddha had attained enlightenment. It's a world heritage site. And finally the religious ritual ended with a feast for the extended families in the village as is the practice. Jamuna Baba had performed this task. We through this rituals remembered all the dead ancestors of the extended family, the parents-in-law, those from maternal side and paternal side that related to three villages Pipra, Bodarhi and Madhukarpur. I don't know if it gave them Moksha and made them free from the bondage of the rebirth cycle But we did all that as a duty of a religious Hindu and hope they would bless us and our next generations.



Community Feast after returning from Gaya with near ones in Pipra



After Gaya pinddan, Post Shraddh Puja in Pipra, 2000

While I was convalescing after my bye-pass surgery, few young men carried out a day light burglary in my house. The servant was at home. I had gone out for a walk suggested by the doctor. Yamuna had also gone out to an acquaintance's place. When I came back, the burglars tied my hand and made me sit in the bed room. Yamuna also returned and they did the same for her too. They took away whatever they liked. I called police after they left. The SHO promised a lot but didn't do anything.

In early May 2002, we came to know that Mamta, the youngest daughter of Girija, Yamuna's younger sister, was visiting Vaishno Devi. We accompanied them. The trip by bus was really troublesome and arduous for me. I would not have undertaken that. I don't know if we received from the Goddess what we wanted. The shrine is very popular among the Hindus, particularly young business men and professionals, in North India. I liked the place as the management was good. The road right up to the shrine was good with many user-friendly facilities. I could walk all the way up. Yamuna was on a pony back. But for coming down I also took a pony.

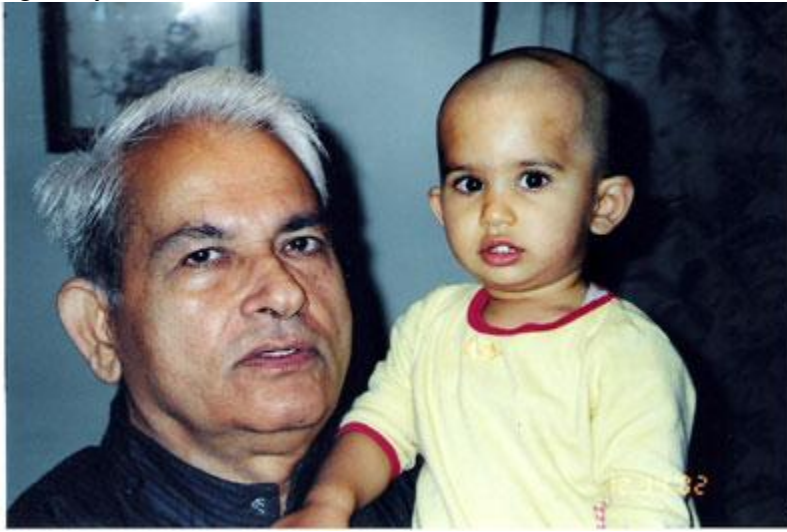


Vashno Devi with Mamta

Rakesh kept on visiting almost regularly every year or so. In 2002, we were in Salt Lake when Rakesh came with Alpana and two kids- Keshav and Anvita. Anvita got a shave of her hairs in the famous Dakshineswar Kali temple where Lord Ramakrishna was the priest and Vivekanand



joined him. For the whole of my family, the temple has a special place of importance. We regularly visited it.



Anvita after the shave

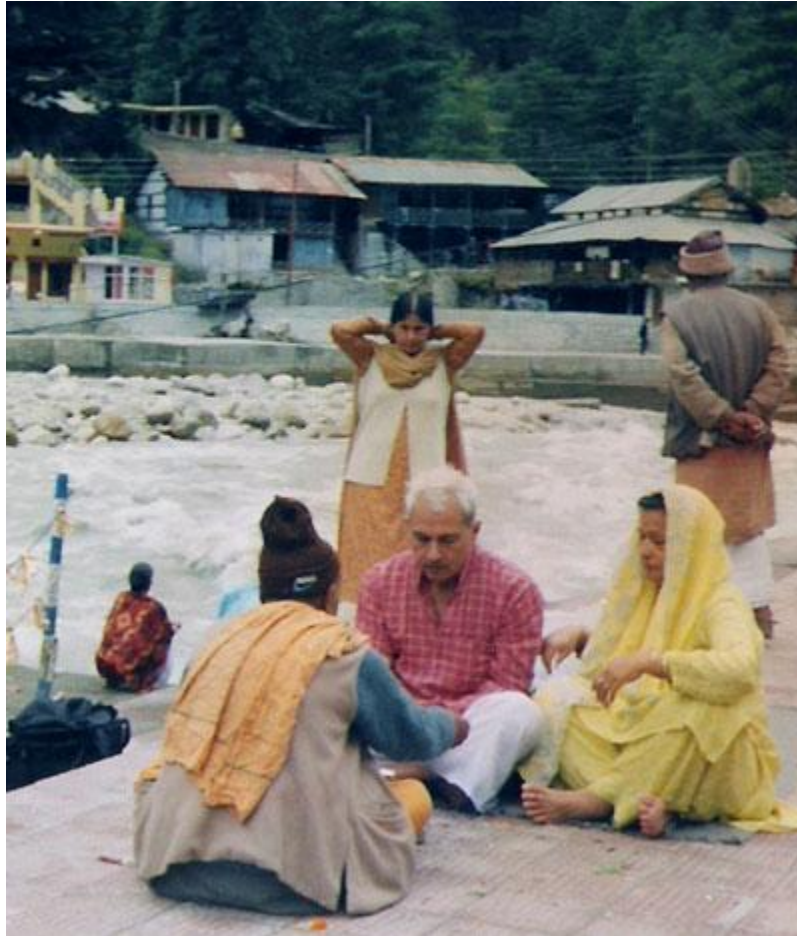


Keshav enjoying the swing in Noida residence

After final effective retirement, I could get only few friends among the retired lot that live in my Sector in Noida. We got to know Aroras through Rakesh and Sirohis through Chardham trip.

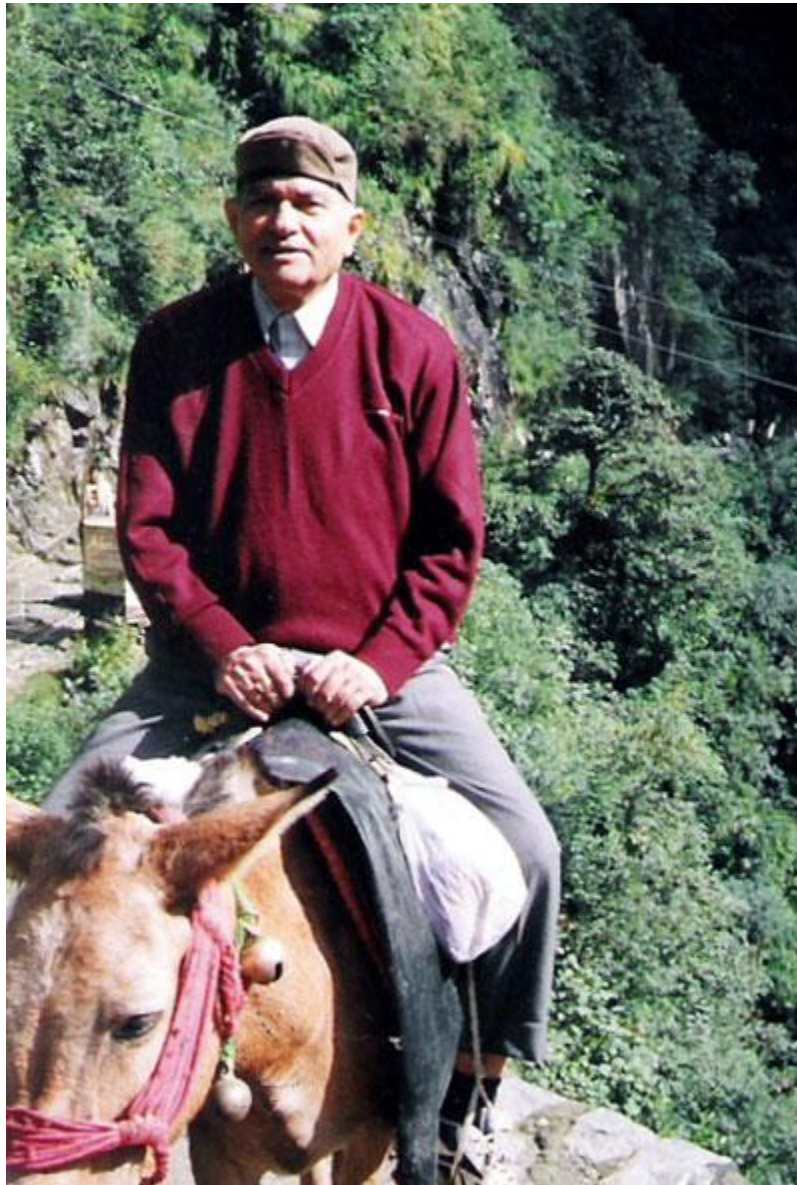
For quite some time, I wished to visit Chardhams of Uttarakhand- Gangotri, Jumunotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath, Mr. Sirohi had heard from someone about my wish. He came to our place and talked about his intention to join us. I just knew him as a resident of our sector. We had met also sometimes during my morning walk. I agreed and between September 6 and 14, 2003, the two of us with our wives set on for Chardham. Sirohi had arranged the rented 'Indica' car from Muradnagar. One of his brothers was having his business there and so Sirohi was perhaps comfortable with the car arranged through his brother. After a bath in Ganga at Hardwar and lunch in the tourist hotel, we drove up to Chamba and stayed for the night in Uttarakhand tourist

hotel located at the top of the hill. The whole of Uttarakhand is really beautiful with a potential to be developed as an alternative of Kashmir. We could reach Gangotri and later on, Badrinath by our car very easily. I took bath in the cold water and got performed some rituals in Gangotri.



Puja at Gangotri

But it was really a difficult task to reach Jamunotri and then Kedarnath. We used pony. With deep valleys and no experience of riding these small creatures, it was scary. The pony either moved touching the mountain side where I could have broken my head or on the brink of the narrow passage with possibility of going down the valley hundreds of feet if the legs of pony slipped.



Climbing down from Jamunotri

It was only after these visits that I could know that the source of Ganga and Jamuna are many miles away in the Himalayan range instead of Gangotri and Jamunotri. The route of Jamunotri was through Uttar Kashi that is a religious place with a grand temple of Shiva. Unfortunately all these places are very dirty and require attention from the government and the local bodies. I could hardly find a good private hotel in any of these places. How will the NRI Hindus visit these? However, with the Chinese border so near, the government of India have been building and maintaining these roads.

For Kedarnath, we could drive up to Gauri Kund, stayed there for the night before taking the pony ride again for Kedarnath next morning. Kedarnath is one of the twelve most important Jyotirlingas of Shiva in India. The white snow-covered peaks of the Himalayan range of mountains in the background and fast flowing River Mandakini added to the attraction of



Kedarnath. We spent only few hours in hurry to get back to Gaurikund, but the place and the amount of trouble taken deserved an overnight stay. Like all the pilgrim centres, Kedarnath requires some special attention from the state government and religious bodies to create all types of facilities for pilgrims. Good facilities would have attracted even rich NRIs. But who will do that? All these places are providing a lot of seasonal employment and good earning for immigrant Nepali young men and some even elderly ones. Unfortunately Indians perhaps can't do that hard a menial work, they can only beg as I observed.



At Badrinath Temple

The road from Gauri Kund to Badrinath was much better. We passed through Srinagar, took lunch in Chamoli and reached Joshi Math in time to continue our drive up to Badrinath. However, I had not come prepared with sufficient warm clothing. It was very cold for the clothes that we had. We couldn't get the accommodation in the tourist hotel that we had planned and managed with the second best. In night we went up to the temple to find out the distance and the route in advance to plan the programme for the next day. It was a great pilgrimage.

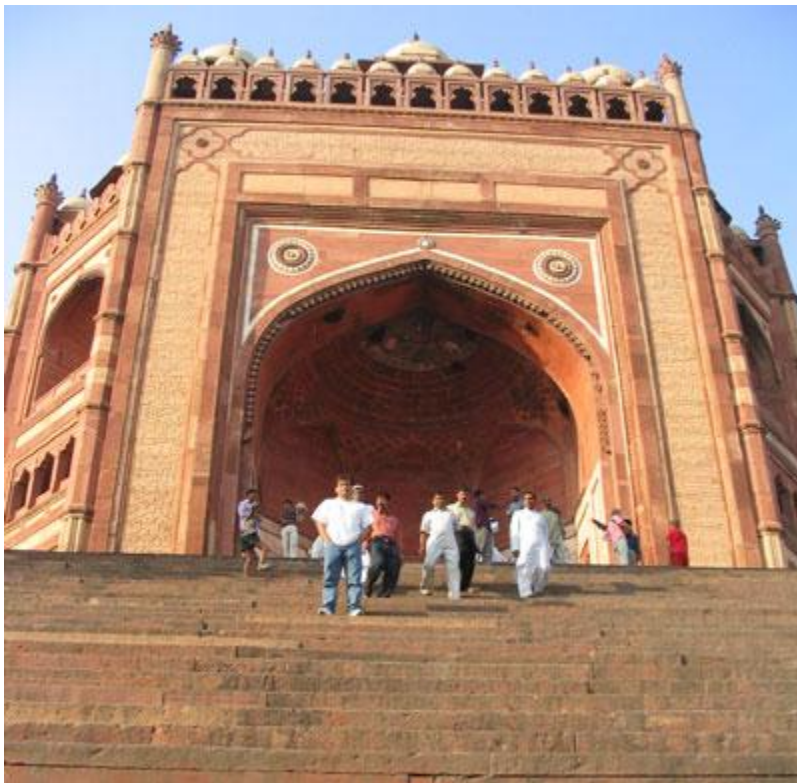
On September 14, we started from Badrinath at 9.30 AM after taking bath in hot spring and visiting the main temple and drove straight to Noida with some rest breaks. I was interested to spend a day in Badrinath. It was necessary to enjoy the beauty of the snow capped mountains- Nar and Narayan as well as Neelkanth peaks and the river Alaknanda. I had a wish to go up to Mana, the village on the border with China. But Sirohi had some urgent land related work in Noida. We returned with a hope of a revisit some day.

In 2004 Anand visited us at Noida from US. He remained tensed till he got his visa from the American Embassy. We visited Agra, Hardwar, and Rishikesh and went to Calcutta. We returned via Patna.





With Anand at Tajmahal



Fatehpur Sikri



With Ashok and family In Danapur, 2004

On return, we found the house burgled. Yamuna in this second burglary lost a lot of her ornaments that she had brought in from banks for putting on during the kitty party that was there just two days before we left for Calcutta with Anand. Interestingly, I deposited the cash that she received in kitty in her account, but she never asked me for the ornaments. They took away other costly items too. However, we celebrated Dipawali soon thereafter with heavy heart.

Anand bought a desktop for me with printer and introduced me with blogging to use internet a little more extensively and passionately too.

On return, Anand set up a blog site, [www.drishtikona.com](http://www.drishtikona.com) for my viewpoints to get me a wider readership. Over the years, blogging has become a passion and past time too for me. I keep on reading, thinking innovatively and expressing my views. I have written extensively on Bihar and made it free for anyone to publish that. I also used the websites of patnadaily.com and bihartimes.com to express my views on Bihar- its problems and solutions. It has created a new group of acquaintances for me that, sometimes, make me happy. Earlier I used to enter a blog every day. However, over the years I have slowed.

In another short trip with Sirohis, we went to Nainital. Nainital was a beautiful creation of Britishers. Nainital Lake was alluring me for a boating, but Mr. Sirohi was not enthusiastic about Yamuna's suggestion. The market right near the lake was selling everything that tourists would like to buy. However, the whole of the surrounding of the lake would have been maintained and kept cleaner. From one of the better locations at height, we could see the beautiful peaks of Himalaya at far distance.



Yamuna with Mrs. Sirohi near Nainital Lake

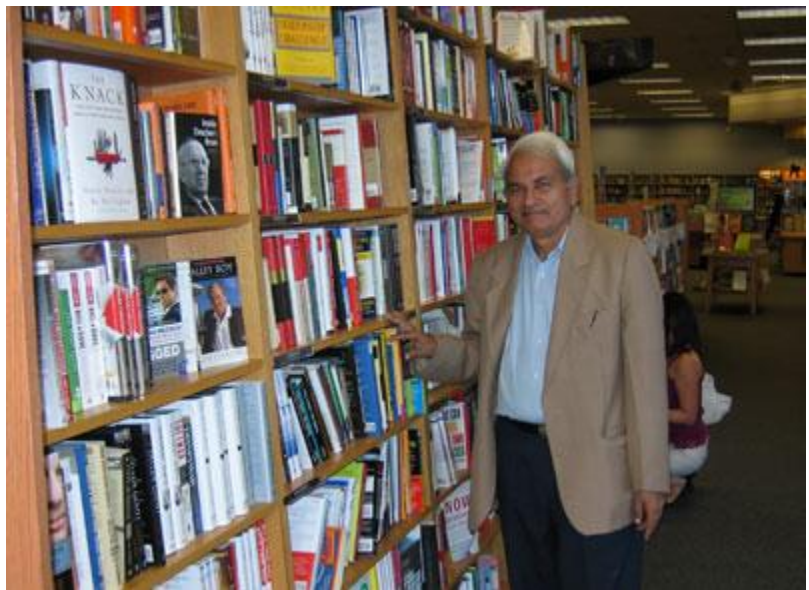
While returning we stayed at the guest house of GB Pant Agriculture University arranged by Kailash Nararayan Singh. Kailash worked for many years in the university and has settled in Kichha near Pant Nagar. Mrs. Kailash narrated the story of my letter to her from Kharagpur. I didn't remember the incident then nor do I today. Kailash had bought land for farming when he was working and has set up a huge rice mill in it. He appeared to be physically fit and still works with the sincerity of a young man. The dinner was really sumptuous. I ate a little too much and fell sick that night creating problems for Yamuna, Sirohis and Kailash. We had to visit hospital in that strange place.



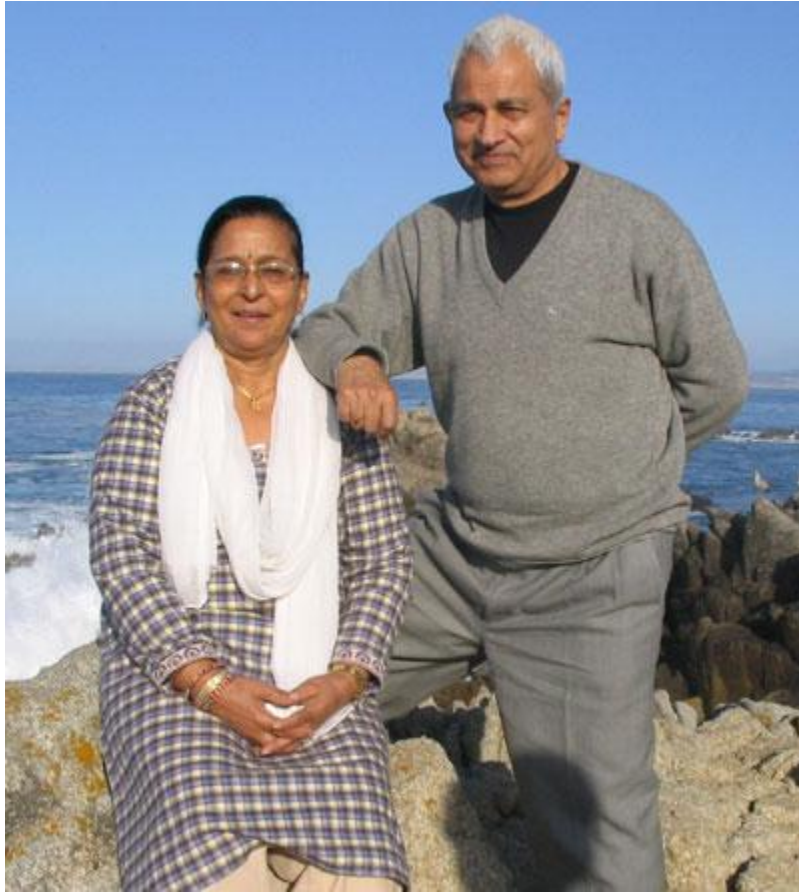
With Dr. Kailash Narayan Singh outside his rice mill in Kichcha

We visited US in February 2005 on invitation from Anand. Anand was still a bachelor. Rajesh had completed his education with an exemplary support from Anand. Shephali had also joined Rajesh and Svanik had arrived. Anand did all that I would have done and was not able to do that. Rajesh had started working too. He had come back from a job in Ohio to work in Silicon Valley. We lived with Anand for almost six months. Anand had arranged a bigger accommodation in Mansion Grove with two bedrooms. He paid for all the air fare. Our main task was to convince Anand for his marriage which was the last of our responsibility for the family that we have created. I had advertised through matrimonial and had some very good girls in waiting for Anand to make the final selection. But we failed to convince him and to know what he wanted.





At Borders in US, My favourite place, 2005



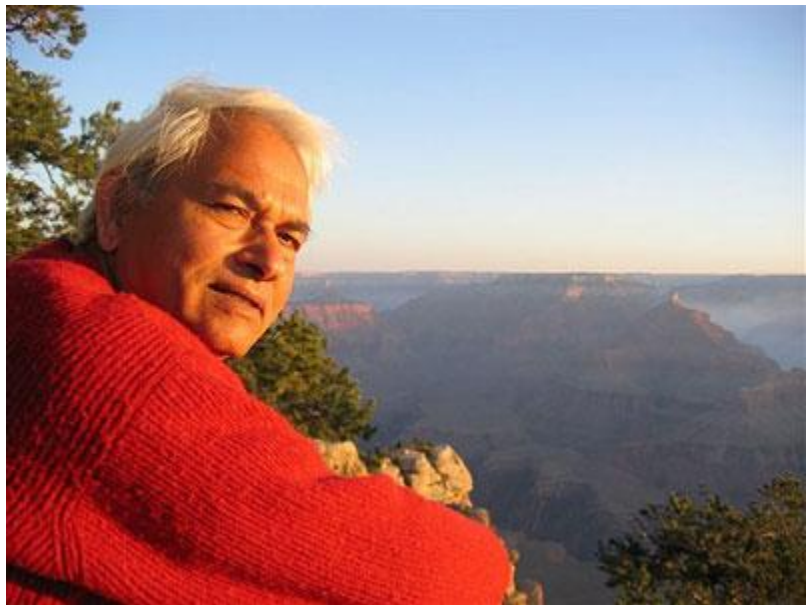
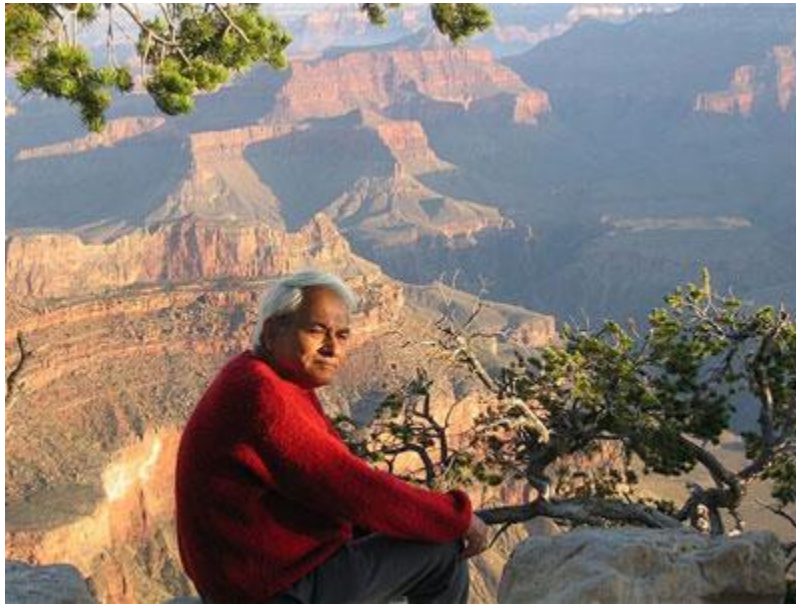


In US 2005

We had many outings. In some Rajesh and Shephali accompanied. The major one was to Phoenix in Arizona where from Anand completed his MS. We visited Arizona state university and met Devesh and his wife Joan. Devesh also did his MS from Arizona state University. He married with the American girl, Joan. We had participated in the marriage that was held in Durgapur. Rakesh and Alpana with Keshav and Anvita had come for the marriage.







Grand Canyon, 2005

We went to Grand Canyon and on return visited Las Vegas and Hoover Dam too. It was a great tour and long holiday for both, me and Yamuna. The children celebrated our golden marriage anniversary too. But we returned to India after six months totally confused.

It was sometime late in the same year of 2005, Anand informed about his decision to marry Shannon, who was also working for CISCO. They got married on 2006. Unfortunately we couldn't be present in the marriage. The family present in USA organized the marriage. We could only send our blessings through some gifts for the marriage. Rakesh, Rajesh, and their



wives Alpana and Shephali arranged and managed the marriage in Indian style in the temple premises of Denville.





Anand Marries Shannon in Denville Temple

Rajesh and Shephali came to Noida with Svanik after the marriage of Anand with Shannon. Rajesh got his visa endorsed. They also visited Salt Lake and Patna.

2007 was pretty enjoying. I with Yamuna joined the tilak ceremony in the marriage of Brajesh, the eldest son of Nirmal. Nirmal has settled in Varanasi. We stayed at the guest house of Institute of Technology. Dr. Kavindra Rai, the then head of Mathematics Department had arranged that. One day I addressed the students and the faculty members of mechanical Engineering department. Interestingly, all the vernacular newspapers of Varanasi covered my lecture next day. While in Varanasi, we visited Sarnath and few important temples of Varanasi as well as the famous Vindhyachal temple too. One of my acquaintance of Noida, Shri Babulal Gehlot who was the chief engineer in PWD there at that time provided car that made the stay very enjoyable. For the marriage, we had to move to Patna via Sasaram. I intentionally travelled by road to assess the improvement of infrastructure over the years.

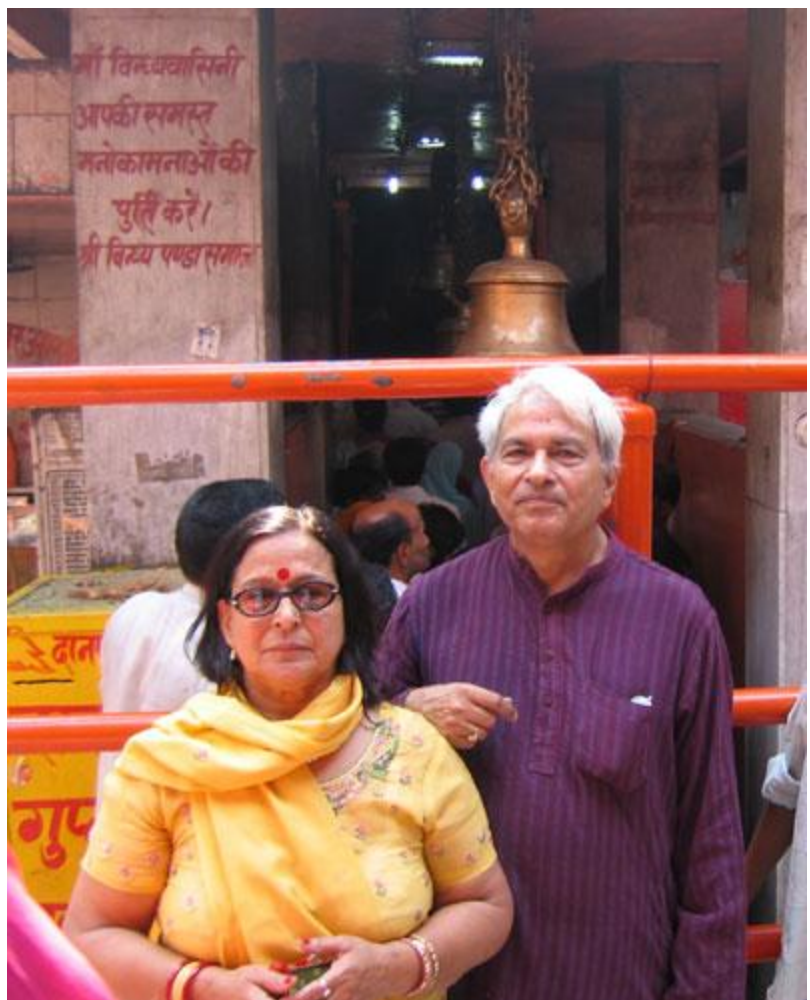


Sarnath Stupa where Budhdha gave first sermon





With cousin sisters at Nirmal's residence in Varanasi



In the temple premises of Vindhyachal



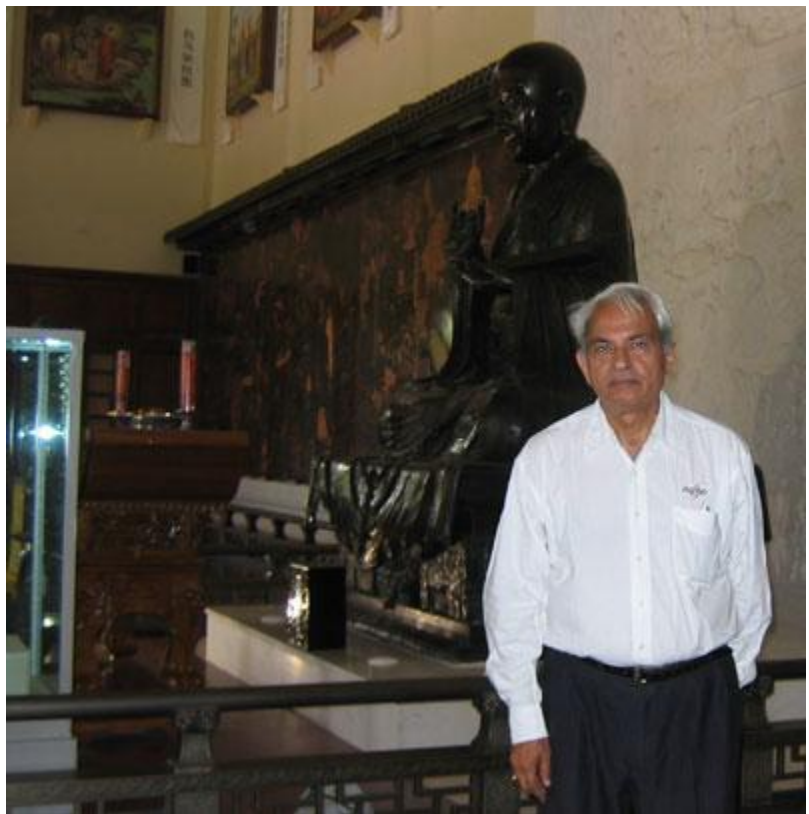
Yamuna in Chunar Pottery shop



Babloo (Brajesh) marriage in Patna with Nand Kishore Chacha



In Nalanda main shrine with Yamuna and Janardan Sharma



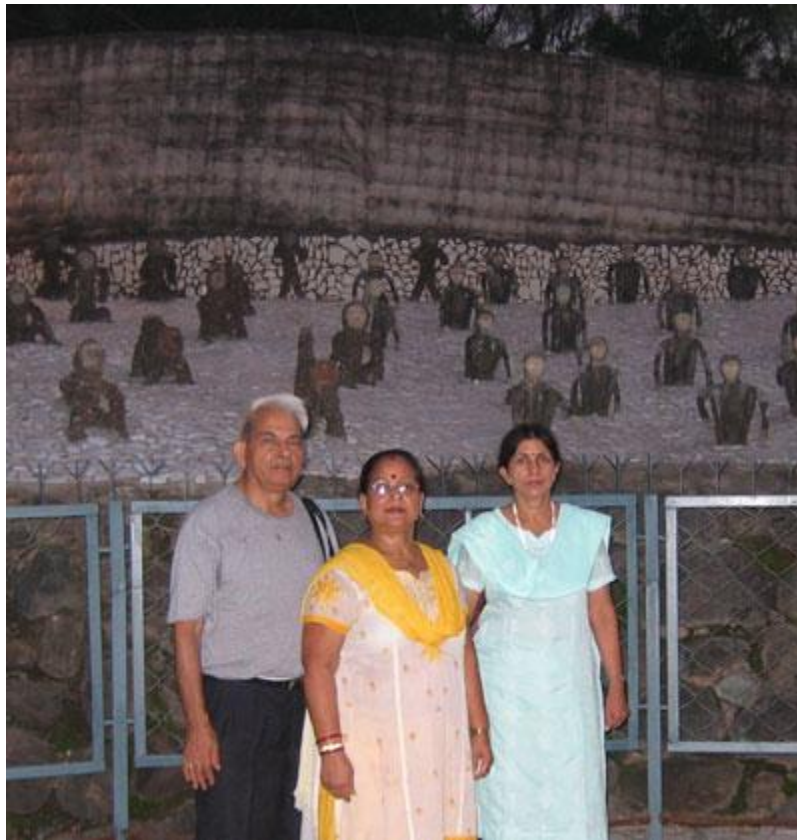
In the temple built by Chinese

In Sasaram for the first time we stayed in a hotel. Yamuna needed a commode type toilet, and that was not there in the house of Chandramani Mama then. We went to Pipra also for few hours. From Sasaram to Patna too we travelled by road and in Patna we stayed with Janardan



Sharma in Kankarbagh. Before leaving Patna, we visited Nalanda, Rajgrih, Pawapuri and the site of ancient Patliputra in Kumhrara.

Next trip of the year was to Manali through Chandigarh and Shimla in July 2007 with Sirohis. We visited Chandigarh. I had once visited Chandigarh, while on an official visit to Parwano to see a DCM foundry but hadn't moved around to appreciate it. I was happy that I could make it. In Chandigarh, we stayed at ISKON centre and moved around the planned city. As Sirohis had lived in Chandigarh for many years, they were of big help. We visited the famous Rock Garden made out of wastes by Tekchand Sharma.



In Rock Garden, Chandigarh



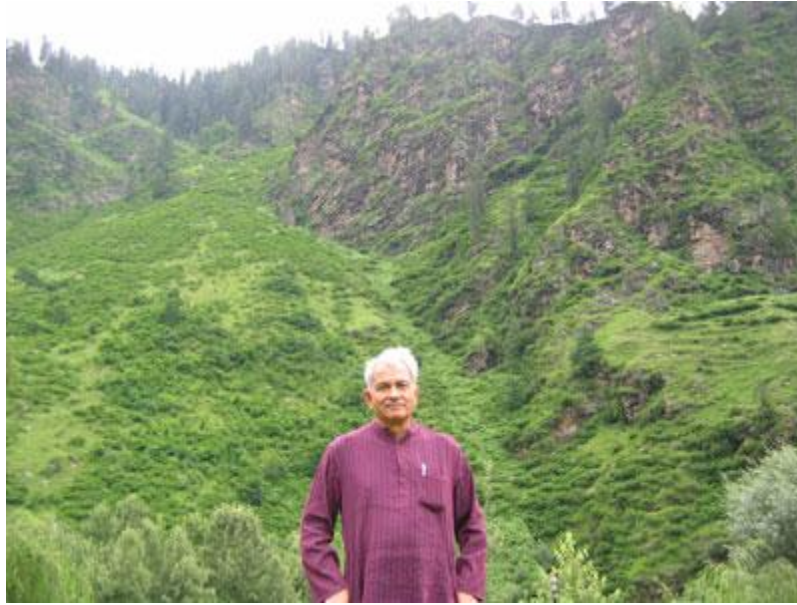


In front of Pinjore Garden

In Manali trip, we stayed everywhere in Himachal Government tourist hotels. We found it really good. Manali region is really picturesque and enjoyable for those from the plane of India in summer.



In the lawn of a roadside Himachal Tourist Hotel on way to Shimla



In Manali

One night in October 2007, I thought of visiting the Golden Temple at Amritsar. And this time my another friend JS Arora with his wife accompanied us. We stayed while going in Ludhiana with a relative of Aroras in night before reaching Amritsar. Golden Temple provided peace and enlightened me too. It was at least one temple where I could take photographs.

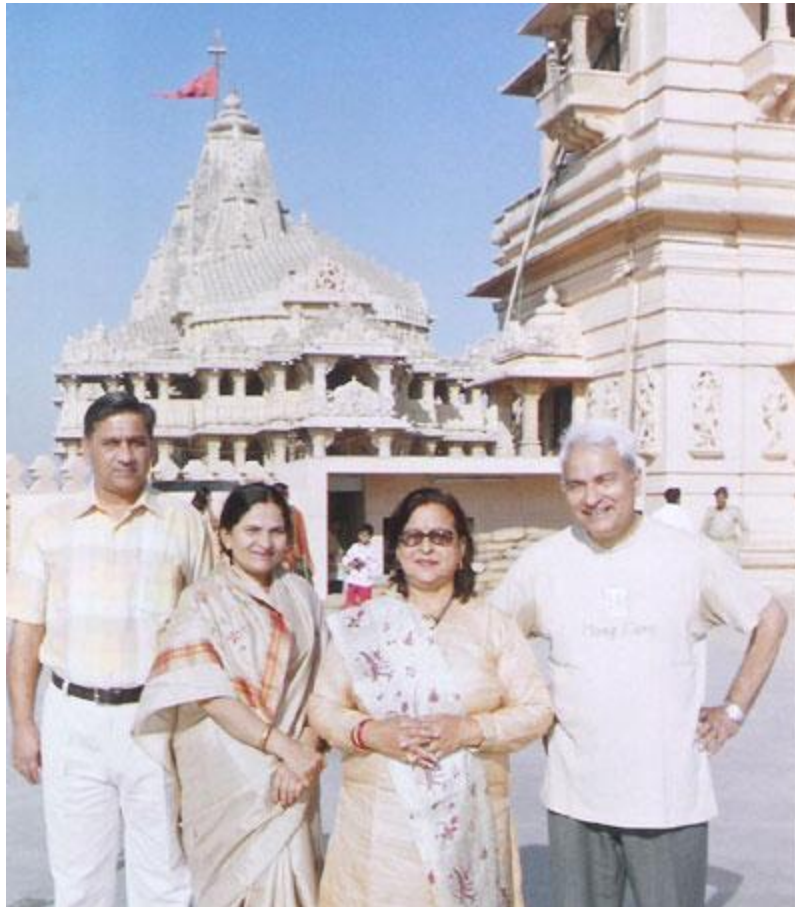






The parade at Wagah Border with Pakistan was really wonderful. And the visit to Jalianwala Bag, the memorial of the massacre by a brute British officer of the large number of helpless commoners in pre-independence India, took me back in history. We became independent after a lot of sacrifices and blood shedding.

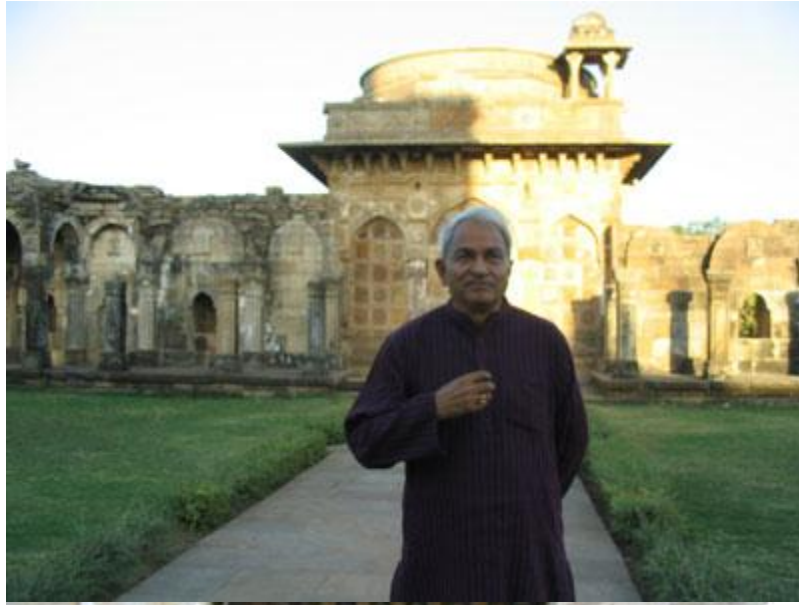
We went to Vadodara, lived with Ashok when all the three children- Deepak, Prakash and Jyoti, were with him. We with Ashok and Bibha visited Dwarka, Porbandar, and Somnath as well as Pawagarh. Dwarka was one of the four dhams; the other three are Jagannath Puri (East), Badrinath (North), and Rameshwaram (South). Dwarka is the place where from Krishna lived and ruled after he left Mathura and Brindaban. Many places around Dwarka are related to various stories of his divine life including the one where he was killed by an arrow of hunter. Porbandar is the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi. But Somnath is more historic. Mahmood Gajnavi looted the rich temple several times. The present temple is a new one built after independence. One gets a nostalgic feeling after hearing the story of Somnath,



In front of Somnath Temple

After visiting Dwarka, I claimed to have completed the pilgrimage of three of the four famous Hindu dhams. Only Rameshwar remained to be visited.





In Heritage City of Pawagarh-Champaner near Vadodara

I visited the world heritage site of Pawagarh again. I had been to this place in one of the visits to Vadodara with guests when the Isuzu truck plant of HM was getting set up in Halol.

We were in Vadodara during that Holi.

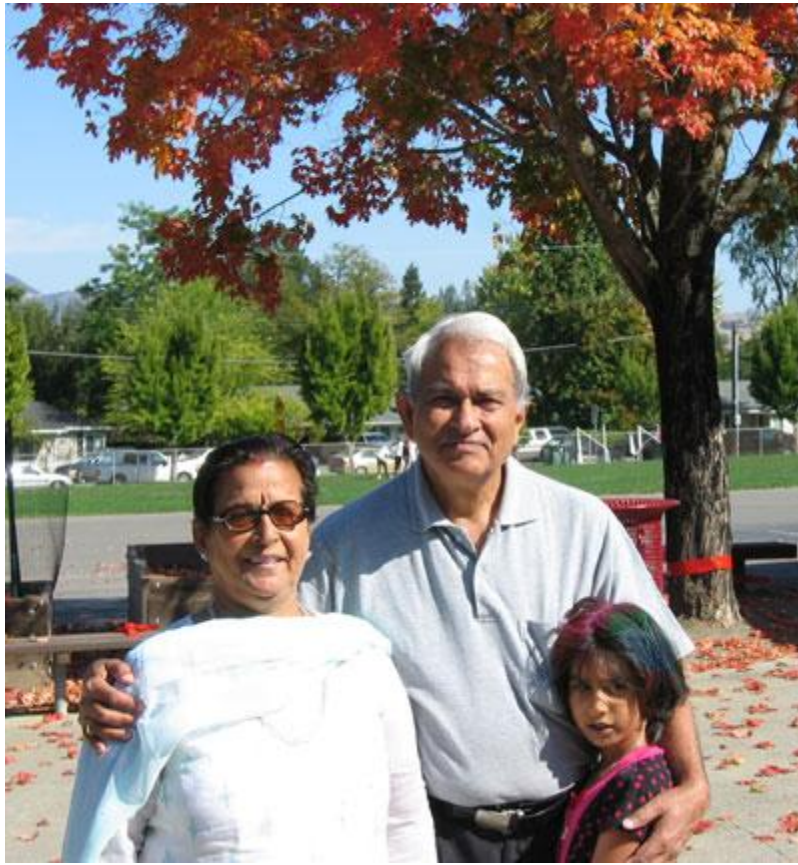


Yamuna playing Holi with Biva in Vadodara

One day I really got sick while walking. It was difficult for me to walk that short distance back to his residence. Luckily, I was with Ashok. As a precautionary measure Ashok got me checked at railway hospital there. Perhaps I was psychologically sick. After the open heart of 2000, I quite often get a fear with slight heaviness in the chest. It had happened thrice till date. Every time it stressed Yamuna. I had to get me admitted for some hours in Kailash Hospital. Fortunately it had nothing to do with the weak heart.

We, in 2008, found it prudent to wind up all the personal belongings that we were maintaining at the second floor of AJIRA to rent the whole house. It meant disposal, gifting and shifting of a huge lot of items collected in about forty years while working for Hindustan Motors. We could also sell the land near Hind Motor factory that Yamuna had bought years ago for setting up some commercial units if not by me, perhaps by one of the three sons. We got a fair enough price. The credit goes to Upesh, the eldest son of Shri Sesar Singh, who arranged the sale to his group of friends in Konnagar. In return, I gave him a kingsize bed and a show case that his wife had asked. There was no point in waiting for some prospective crook to create some trouble. In January 2008, Anand came in India with Shannon and sweet little Emma and stayed for almost a fortnight. We went for a short trip to Chokhi Dhani, Jaipur, and Agra and visited Salt Lake, Calcutta too.

In 2008, Shannon invited us in Pleasanton and we could visit and remain with them to welcome Zach on his arrival on September 24. It was a great experience when we kept Emma with us for a day or two, when Anand was attending to Shannon in hospital. We spent our quality time with Emma.



In school of Keshav and Anvita, 2008



With Newborn Zach in lap, 2008





Emma with Svanik in Pleasanton House



Durgapuja in Denville Temple

As usual, I would be getting up in early hours and worked or browsed in the office room. Shannon would bring Zach and hand over to me. Thereafter, it was me who kept him sleeping or playing. We visited Stanford University and its bookstore. I did take a tour of NUMMI plant- the joint collaboration of Toyota and General Motors. Borders remained my place of interest in 2008 also as it was in 2005.





Before a formal visit of NUMMI



In Sears' Studio, Pleasanton, California, USA 2008

Up to 2008, all three, Rakesh, Rajesh and Anand were all living in close vicinity to each other in Denville, Santa Clara, and Pleasanton respectively in famed Silicon Valley, California. I thought that I was really lucky. However, it didn't last long. Today all three are in three different places.

During my visit to US in 2008, I wrote a blog on October 13, '[Terah -Thirteen](#)', as we had grown to 13 by then.

“We were at Sears' photo studio for photographs of the family, an initiative by Shannon. The photographer enquired about the total number in the group. There was a little bit confusion. How many are we now- 11 or 13? We are now 13. When we are in India, they are 11 here in US. That caused the confusion. This includes Krish who have arrived on September 25.”



Therah, 2008



With Future of Family

## **We are‘Tera(h)’.**

Bestow all the kindness, keep us in peace and give all the happiness.

We were one of the luckiest then to have all the three sons with their family within 30 minutes of driving time in Deville, Pleasanton and Santa Clara in California near San Francisco.

Though the innovations have made the distance irrelevant, it always remains a wish to live together or at least nearer.

“13 may be nothing more than a number, just one number in a harmless and immensely useful abstract system of counting and measuring developed by our ancestors.”- [Sanal Edamaruku](#)”

However I consider myself the blessed one.

Interestingly, just few days after Dipawali I got a telephone call from my Kashmiri neighbour informing about the burglary, the third one in my house. The burglars have broken the front



door, when a security guard of the neighbour was at 5 metres from the door. Though I informed the police, nothing happened.

In year 2009, we could also make it to Andaman that is so historic for its Cellular Jail.



Famous Cellular Jail in Andaman also known as Kalapani

Islands are just beautiful.





Photographs in different locations around Andaman Island



And finally we could make a tour of temples of South India that became memorable in many ways. Since our visit to Port Blair, [Andaman](#) in March, we had been contemplating to visit Rameshwaram to complete our Char Dham Yatra to ensure salvation as Hindu scriptures prescribe. Earlier I thought to go to Rameshwar via [Bangalore](#). I took the assistance of my helping friend OP using car. I wanted to do [Hampi](#) too that is among dream plans. Unfortunately both of my friends who had been accompanying me in my trips usually failed me at the last moment as they did for the Andaman one.

I came to know of the tour conducted by Tamil Nadu tourism department through an ad in TOI. I preferred it as it was a Delhi-to-Delhi package. The tour covered [Chennai](#), [Mamallapuram](#), [Punducherry](#), [Thanjavur](#), [Rameswaram](#), [Kanniyakumari](#), [Madurai](#), [Kodaikanal](#), [Tiruchirapalli](#), [Kancheepuram](#), and [Tirupathi](#) starting on Nov 21 from New Delhi railway station and returning on Dec 4. We were accommodated at Hotels of Tamil Nadu Tourism. For the total package for two, I paid Rs 34,300 because of the discounts as senior citizens. The charge for Yamuna as woman was further discounted. Yamuna got hurt in Tirupathi and on return from the hill top, I lost my Canon camera and more than that about 850 photos with it. I tried my best to get it back through all my contacts, but I was expecting a little too much. And I keep on brooding about the loss. I can't have the trip again and photograph those places and moments.



Group in Tamil Nadu Tourism Trip, 2009



Bathing in sea at Rameshwaram before visiting temple

We are now in 2010 when Shannon and Anand have got built a house and shifted to Cary, North Carolina. Rajesh is working from home in New York for his company in Silicon Valley. Shephali is doing her MD in New York and attached with a big hospital. Rakesh is still in Denville in Silicon Valley, California. He runs a small company of his own and Alpana works from home. Anand got his second house in Cary, North Carolina. I was behind persuading him and Shannon to keep the house of Pleasanton too and put it on rent.



Anand's Pleasanton House





Anand's House in Cary, North Carolina

We had our Dipawali and Halloween at Cary in 2010.





the Jordan Lake, 2010



2010 Outing in US

Anand and Shannon have proposed us to live with them. Yamuna wishes to own a small house, be it an apartment or single family home. At the age of 71+, it seems to me a daring as well scaring task.

We hardly know what will be the last abode. Further, over the years many close acquaintances, friends and relatives have left. Even those who are there, hardly meet. The world has become pretty small one.

With old way of living in joint family dead, we two at least live together and even if we are to go out we go together. Mostly, we wait all the time for some telephones and some guests.

In March, 2011, I visited Pipra with Yamuna and Ashok. We couldn't enjoy Holi festival because of bereavement in the neighbourhood. But I could fulfill a long due promise made to fulfill her wish to perform a cow offering to a good Brahmin so that she would very easily cross the River Baitarani that comes on the way to hell after death. On March 22, we had this function in which quite a few of our relatives and elders from the village participated. Yamuna gave some gifts to them and took their blessings. Her elder brother, Shri Shiv Prasad Misra and nephews also came for the function.







Ashok, Chachi and Yamuna on March 25, 2011 in Noida

Ashok and Chachi returned with us to Noida. Chachi was sick for some months. She had lost appetite. It was not possible to have proper treatment in the village. Ashok left for Vadodara next day. He has all medical facilities there to take care of the ill health of Chachi. Later on, the doctors detected traces of cancer spots in liver. Ashok tried his best to take care of Chachi. I kept on talking occasionally with Ashok and Chachi. Many a times, it appeared that some miracle is happening and she would live for some more time. But suddenly, on August 27, 2011, I received a call from Ashok that Chachi had left us forever. It was just shocking. Alok assigned me to bring a portrait of Chachi duly framed to Pipra for the final function on September 7, 2011.

I with Yamuna visited to Bangaluru between November 3-8, 2011. OP Khanna allured me to join the Golden Jubilee celebration of IIT, Kharagpur 1961 batch. It was a great get together at the famous Bangalore Club and meeting many friends almost first time after I left the college in 1961.









At Bangalore Club

We stayed with OP Khannna and Prabha. I met with Niranjana, the husband of their daughter Mini and their son Sloke too.



We then could fulfill my long cherished wish of visiting Hampi, the capital city of Vijaynagara Empire presently in ruins.





C





Hampi near famous Stone Chariot

I received a wonderfully prepared souvenir of the alumni meet in Bangaluru after few days. However, none sent any greeting for the New Year. But over the years, all the emotional attachments become formal and momentary.

Over the years we have grayed with wrinkles and facial transformations. It becomes sometimes difficult to recognize many with whom we lived in earlier part of the life. Almost everything around us related to the quality of living has also changed. For the alumni meet in IIT, Kharagpur after 50 years of our passing out, I suggested to some friends to send a latest photograph with one of 1961 attached for recognizing them easily.

And on February 21, 2012, Nand Kishore Chacha breathed his last while he was being taken to Sasaram from Pipra. He was perfectly fine till morning and after brushing he developed chest pain. Perhaps, Nand Kishore was the nearest to me after dadaji. The relation started in my childhood remained amicable under all stresses. Over the years all the elders in the family have left us. And now I am the next in the queue.

I am giving some photographs from my own album to appreciate how we have changed over the years:



In HM Temple



In US

And those three lovely ones have grown so big losing all the softness of the childhood.

.



By 2008, when we were there, Anand was married with Shannon. Emma had arrived. They were living in Pleasanton in small beautiful house. Shephali had got her internship in New York. Rajesh was to move out to New York soon. He was keeping Svanik with him. Rakesh had bought a house Denville. By August 2011, Rajesh got his green card after almost twelve years he left us for US. Rakesh and Anand were already citizens of US. They have chosen this and are happy. I don't know really if I feel happy about it.





During US 2008

### **Changes over the years**

Over the years, I saw the radio getting replaced by 2-in-one radio and recorder, music system, black and white television, colour TV, and then switching over to HD LCD or plasma flat TV and even Apple TV. At one time how difficult it was to be in touch with my parents in village Bodarhi. Today every member of the family in the village Pipra has a mobile phone of his or her own. Everyone in the extended family can remain in touch if one wants.

Over the years, I kept on wishing to let others read my views that are many times great. Those who controlled publishing had hundred and one reasons for not accepting my writings. Today I hardly bother I keep my views even the silly ones on my blog and get a mental satisfaction. As it appears by now, I am having more than 2500 enteries containing my viewpoints on different topics on my blog [www.drishtikona.com](http://www.drishtikona.com).

Over the years I have become a little more god fearing.



Over the years, I have felt I must confess that I was incapable and coward to take advantage of the opportunity that I got many a times. My arrogance with unpleasant vocal cord distanced even the well0wishers. I was hesitant to take risks and then I took excuse of my own design. Whatever happened was all destined. That will provide me perhaps the happiness of life that I badly need today.

## **Appendix**

**My horoscope created by Lakshmi Baba**

श्री० गणेशाय नमः

श्री० इन्द्र राय शर्मा

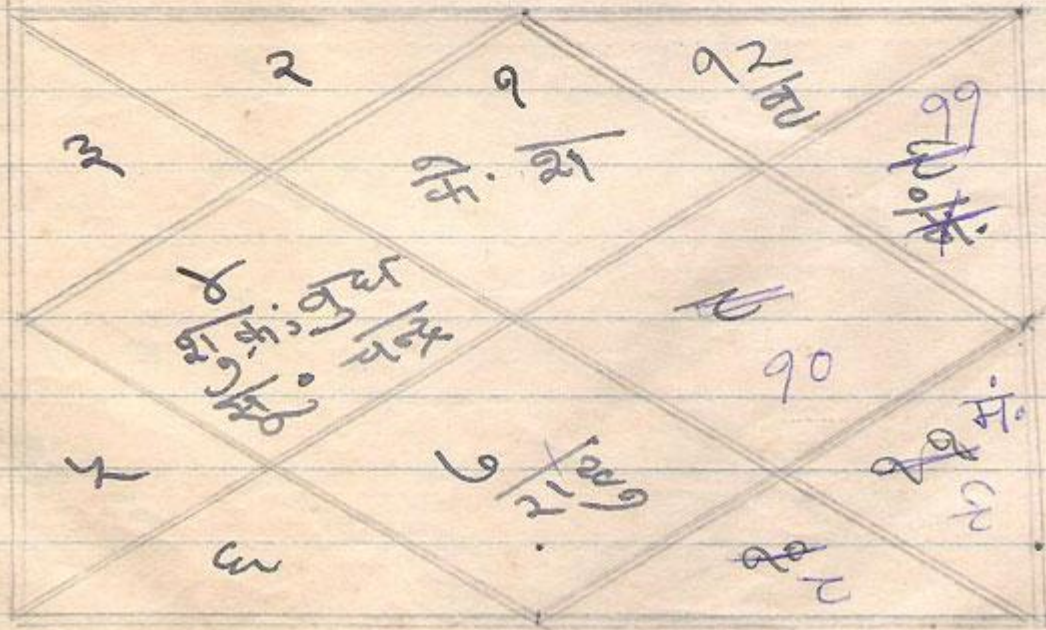
पिता का नाम :- श्रीशिव पुजन राय  
जन्मतिथि :- अधिक श्रावण मास कृष्ण  
पक्ष चतुर्दशी तिथि दिन सोमवार  
~~सम्बत~~ सम्बत १८८६

पुण्य नक्षत्र में द्वितीय चरण में जन्म  
राशि :- कर्क राशि

दिन मान ३२/२८ रात्रिमान २७/३२

उभय मान ६०/० शाक १८६९

पुण्य तत्रोपरि श्लेषार्थ  
२ चरण १ उ अक्षरों पर राशिक नाम धेनु





卐 श्री गणेशाय नमः 卐  
卐 अपने परिवार की जन्म तिथियां 卐

- १ श्री. लक्ष्मी प्रसाद राय । { बुधवार- माघ शुक्ल द्वितीया  
द्वितीया सं. १८६०
- २ श्री. जमुना प्रसाद राय । { रविवार- ज्येष्ठ शुक्ला-  
ष्टमी सं. १८६५
- ३ श्री. शिव पुजन राय । { बुधवार माघ पूर्णिमा  
१८७७ सम्वत्
- ४ श्री. राज किशोर राय । { बृहस्पतिवार वैशाख  
शुक्लाष्टमी सं. १८८६
- ५ श्री. मुक्तेश्वर राय । { बुधवार आश्विन -  
कृष्णपतिपदा सं. १८८०
- ६ श्री. नंद किशोर राय । { सोमवार फाल्गुन कृष्णा  
सप्तम्या सं. १८८३
- ७ श्री. इन्द्र राय शर्मा । { सोमवार श्रावण कृष्णा  
चतुर्दशी सं. १८८६





Thursday the 28th December 1961.  
 शुक्रवार २८ दिसम्बर सन् १९६१ पौष कृ. ६ सं. २०१८ र. उ. ६।४८ र. ञ. ५।१२  
 रा. पौष ७ शकः १९६१ फ. १३६६ प्र. पूस ७ वं. पौष १३ ने. १४ गते

बाहर की लीजा रुपया

सख्तियों का (जस्तरी) -  
 रामानन्द लिवरी - २००)  
 रामजी राग - ५००) अगर रु. ४२०)  
 शिवप्रसाद मिश्र - ४०)  
 ७४०)

गुरुजनों का -  
 अयोदा के साधु - ५००)  
 सिद्ध के जाबजो - १००)  
 ६००)

दुकानदारों का -  
 कुंवर प्रेम साहस - ५०)  
 बाबाजी कागहर - ५०)  
 लालसिंह - ७४)  
 रत्नबाई - ३४)  
 २०० ✓)

शॉप के लोनों का -  
 देवराय आखोसिंह - ५३५)  
 मुखिया सहज (अम्न) १४८५)  
 " रैहन १५००) अम्न (एन) ५०)  
 " रैहन २०००) अम्न (एन) २०)  
 रैहन नाइलगा १८००)  
 ७५२०)

Friday the 29th December 1961.  
 शुक्रवार २९ दिसम्बर सन् १९६१ पौष कृ. ७ सं. २०१८ र. उ. ६।४९ र. ञ. ५।१३  
 रा. पौष ८ शकः १९६१ फ. १३६६ प्र. पूस ८ वं. पौष १४ ने. १५ गते

(३) चरमा निजा नराम

वज्जी आजी - ८०)  
 रामानन्द बाबल - ५१)  
 कुंवर जी मां - १११)  
 ४३० २०१५०  
 गुलीजी मां - २१)  
 दामन के मां - २५)

(१) रु. ६४०  
 (२) " ६००  
 (३) २० ✓  
 (४) ६४२०  
 (५) २६३  
 = २३२

In 1961, I compiled all the family loan

HINDUSTAN MOTORS LTD.

UTTARPARA P. O.  
HOOGHLY (Dist)

Date 24<sup>th</sup> Sep. 1965.

पूज्य दादाजी.

सादर प्रणाम.

मैंने कुछ दिनों पहले एक सार दिया था। अब तो  
सैर लाइड बन्द ही हो चुकी। सर्वजनीन दुर्गा पूजा जो  
सरीब बन्द हो गई थी सरकार द्वारा, वे भी होगी। इस तरह  
भी पूर्वी क्षेत्र में खास कोई आगड़ा नहीं रहा। बरीब यह  
या पांच बार कुछ मिलाकर हवाई हाने हुए।

आप अपने आने के प्रोग्राम के जल्दी लिखिया  
माफ़ी दिनां से आपकी कोई लिखी नहीं मिली। मुझे  
पांच दिनों की छुट्टी हो रही है इसे लेकर। आप अशोक  
एक निर्मल को जरूर साफ़ लाइयें। मैं कुछ भी छुट्टी  
या प्रोग्राम बनाना चाहता हूँ। पर आपके दरमामुसार  
ही। यहाँ पिछले कहीने कुछ ~~75~~ 75 की बेलन लुई की  
होगी। बोनस पर ~~8.75~~ 8.75 रहे हैं। वह भी

कभी तक नहीं ले पाये हैं क्योंकि ~~0.00~~ 0.00 की तरह  
से माफ़ी आगड़ा है। जिन्होंने लिखा है उन्हें ~~0.00~~ 0.00  
वालों ने माफ़ी कीरा भी है। मैं देखा जायेगा।  
विनोद कुमार  
33



बाहर जाने का अभी पक्का नहीं हुआ। पैसेपॉर्ट नहीं  
मिला, फिर financial exchange आदि का आजमा  
कर चल रहा है।

जहाँ तक रुपये बचाने की बात आपन  
लिखी थी वही ही है कोशिश करता हूँ। अब  
पर तो कोई खास खर्च नहीं करता बड़े  
जितना करता हूँ उतना शायद minimum  
है और आपकी इज्जत भी बचानी होगी  
और अपनी भी।

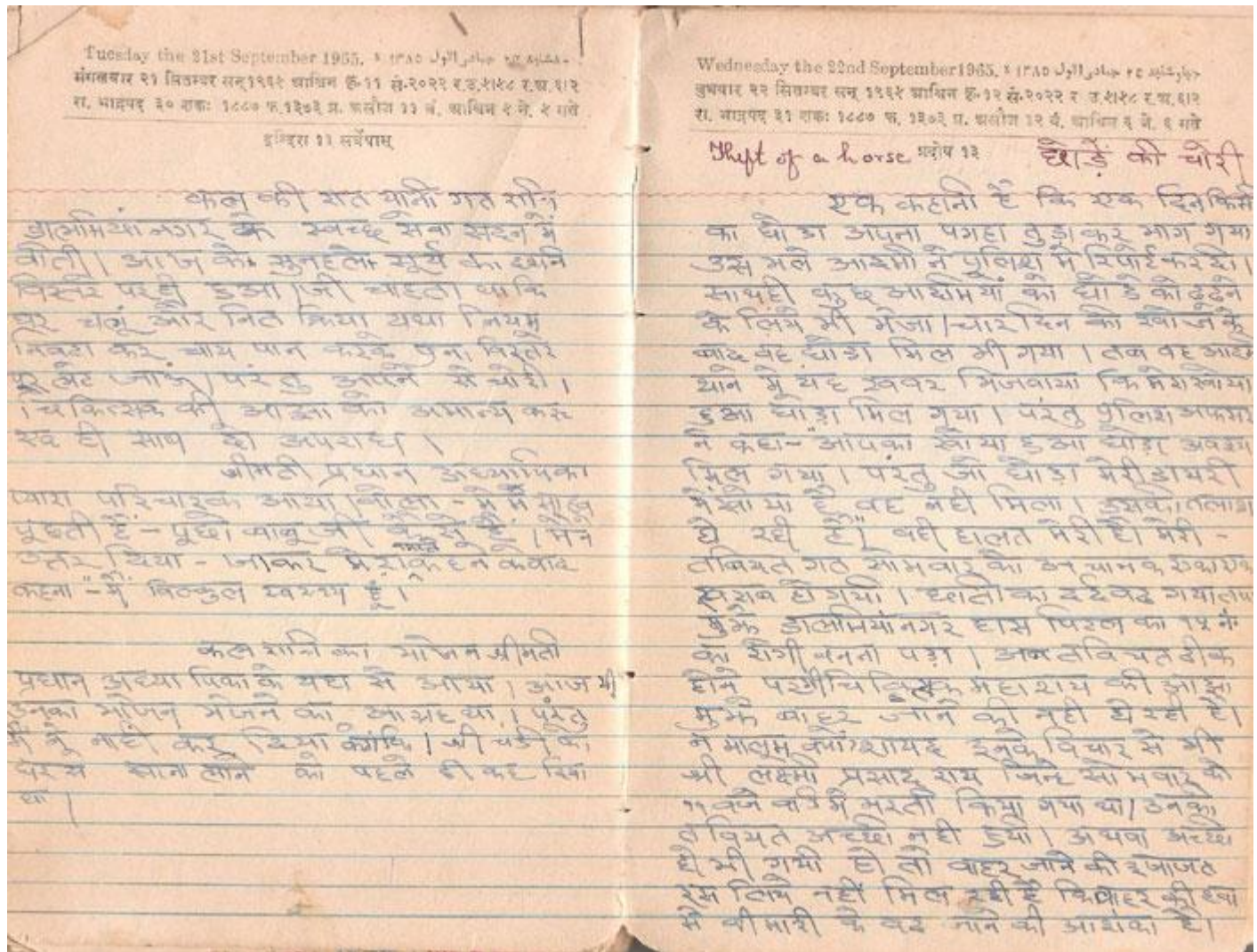
मैंने ये जांच जैसे सो लेकर अभी  
अपने पास 2000) है। पिछले बार जो  
बाबुजी को भेजा तो वह बेतन से वा  
बैंक से एक पैसा भी लेना नहीं था इसी  
तार के बावजूद देर हो गई। अपने ये पैसे  
अगर बाहर नहीं गया तो अगले महीने  
तक 8000) कर घर के कर्ज की एक किरा  
भरवा रहती है।

आशा है आ। कुशल हो आ।  
आपका वी  
वन्द्य

August 5, 1965



My two letters written in 1965 before Lakshmi Baba's death





गुरुका विवरण २५वीं सितम्बर १९६५ पर

Thursday the 23rd September 1965. \* ۲۳ ستمبر ۱۳۸۵

गुरुवार २३ सितम्बर सन् १९६५ श्रावण ६० सं. २०२२ र. २५१९ र. १०११०  
रा. श्रावण १ शक्र: १८८० प. १३०३ म. हस्त १३ सं. श्रावण ३ ने. ७ राते

चीन पाकिस्तान और भारत का युद्ध

आज प्रातः ३:३५ मिन पर नंदधन

जत तीन दिनों से काफ़ी गर्मी पड़ रही थी। अक्सर रात में दबा बंद हो जाता करता था। सोंस लेना भी कठिन हो जाता था। गर्मिमत है कि मैं तीन दिनों यानी ग़त सोमवार जैही डालीमवा नगर के चिकित्सालय में हूँ। परमानमा की घब भी क़ुपा थी। नहीं कही अपने घर में होता तब तो बहुत ही कष्ट होता। परंतु भगवान ने जर्मो से बेसी रक्षा करने के निमित्त ही शुभ रोजी बना दिया।

आज ध्वजे रानि में मौसा तो पहले तो रहर कर दोटे दोटे की डोके आक्रमण से नींद उचर जा रही थी। फिर उवा कंपनी का फ़्लैग भी ग़म दबा देता था कभी लोटे की ख़ोर कहां बाहर किस तरह जेजारी जाय? इसी उचड़े बून में पड़ा था कि दसकी भपकी लग गई। और जोडी खेके बाद सही कि कारण लोटे खुल गयो उठा बाहर संभाल जा आधी मींग उनी थी। देखा ना हू वर्षा जोरां नी चे रही थी। आज ग़त बीस दिनों से वर्षा नहीं हुई थी। अवार की तीरकी थूप। आज कीवकी किसानों के लिये असह्य आनन्द दामद। दिन भर जल गिरा। आज का नही। वर्षा जल भूमि निपस है। लिन हार का बड़े बड़े श्रद्धे बाहरी कोरी। अभी मेरे माका बार कला। नको हो रहे हैं। आज २

Friday the 24th September 1965. \* ۲۴ ستمبر ۱۳۸۵

शुक्रवार २४ सितम्बर सन् १९६५ श्रावण ६० सं. २०२२ र. २५१९ र. १०११०  
रा. श्रावण २ शक्र: १८८० प. १३०३ म. हस्त १३ सं. श्रावण ४ ने. ८ राते

शब्दादिदत्तारां ध्यात्वा १४ आहु ३०

आज 'गुर्गा पूजा' के लिये

स्कुल बन्द हो गया।

आज विहार के मुख्य मंत्री श्री

K. बी. सलूय डालमिया नगर

आने को थे। समय था ४ वज

परंतु मौसिम खराब होने के कारण

नहीं आये।

आज कुछ बाहरी मेहमान भी आनेवाले थे इस कारण क़ुव गैर हाउस दाम-पिटल आदि की सफाई के दिन आगे ही से की जा रही थी। मुख्य मंत्री का आगमन वाली कई जगह बंदन बाइ पताका कैल के आर भी कने थे। मुख्य न आयो परंतु मेहमान तो आगे ही। और उनका स्वागत उमा सैटरी क़ुव में। परंतु सैटरी क़ुव का अपना निजी भवन नहीं ही उसका काय गैर हाउस में होता है। अतः जल मियां नगर क़ुव में ही दावत डको। सुखा पानु वज। आज भी दिन भर भपसी लगी रही। गांव में बुने खर और नंदकिरी  
→ अदि। कलकते आने का तार भी कि इन्ने के यहा से कल ही आ गया था।

यह सभाचार भी सुनने को मिला कि श्री वंगी अपनी लवकी परीक्षा में असफल रहे। परीक्षा में सफल होने के लिये असफल की नैसर्गिकी नितान्त आवश्यकता है।



No. 4033Date of Issue 29.8.69.Sl. No. 8031Roll No. Budge 21

# BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, WEST BENGAL



## Duplicate Certificate

Certified that Indra Ray Sarma  
 Son/Daughter of Shiv Pujan Ray  
 of Birlapur Vidyalyaya, a private candidate,  
 whose Date of birth is Twenty-ninth day of August  
One Thousand Nine Hundred & thirty-nine  
 duly passed the School Final Examination held in the Month of March,  
1955 and was placed in the First Division.

CALCUTTA

West Bengal Board of Secondary Education

Sd/- Rajchandra  
 Deputy Secretary.



# BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION, WEST BENGAL

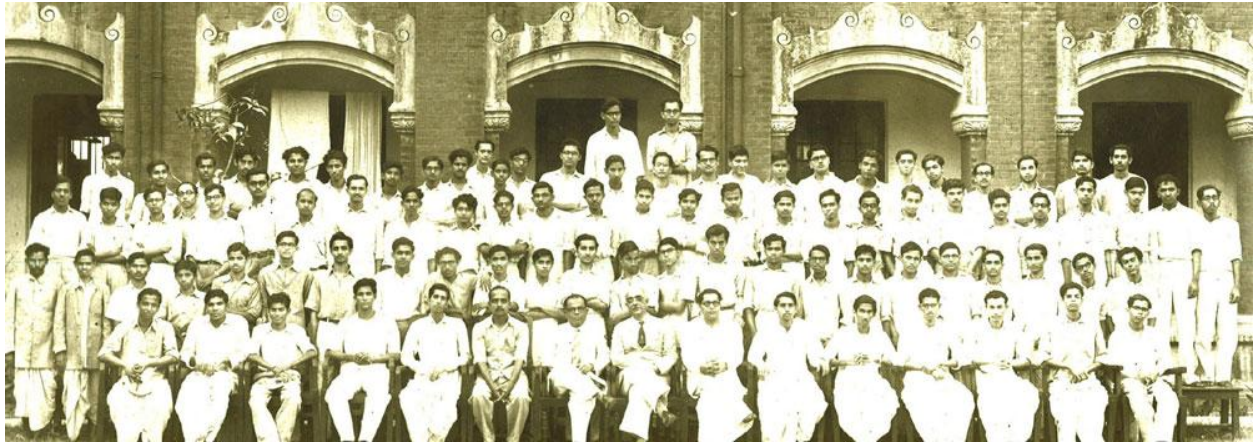
The following are the marks obtained by Indra Ray Sarma

Roll Budge No. 21 of Birlapur  
Vidyalyaya School, at the School Final Examination, 1955.

English			Mathematics Full marks 100 Pass mark 30	History Full marks 100 Pass mark 30	Geography Full marks 50 Pass mark 15	Major Indian Language		Classical, European or Indian Language or any other subject in lieu of it Full marks 100 Pass mark 30	Additional subject Full marks 100 (Mark in excess of 30 is added to the total of a successful candidate.)	Grand Total	1st Div. 480 2nd " 400 3rd " 288
Paper I	Paper II	Paper III				Paper I	Paper II				
100	100	50				100	100				
54	56	25				60	61	5	m		
Total						Total					
135			94	59	21	121		78	75/45	553	1

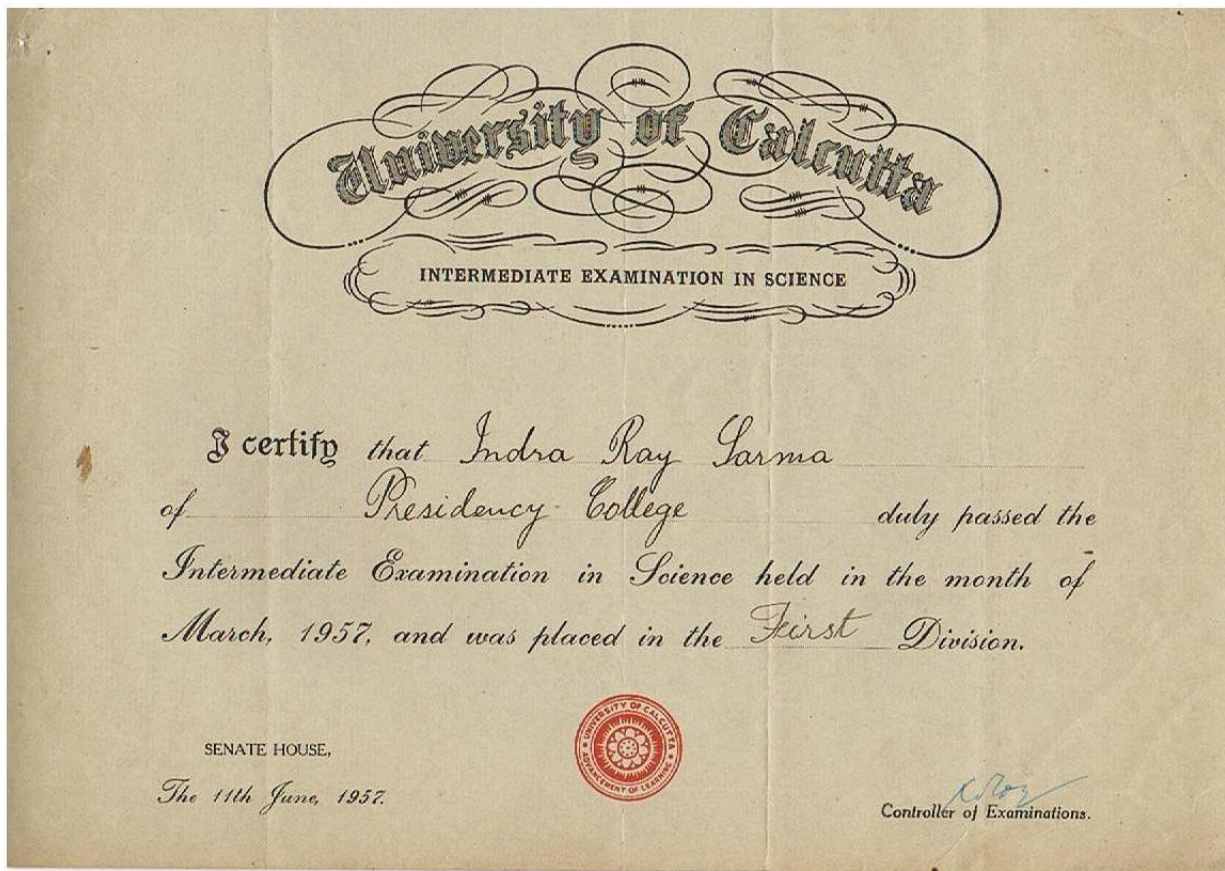
Sd/- Rajchandra  
 Deputy Secretary

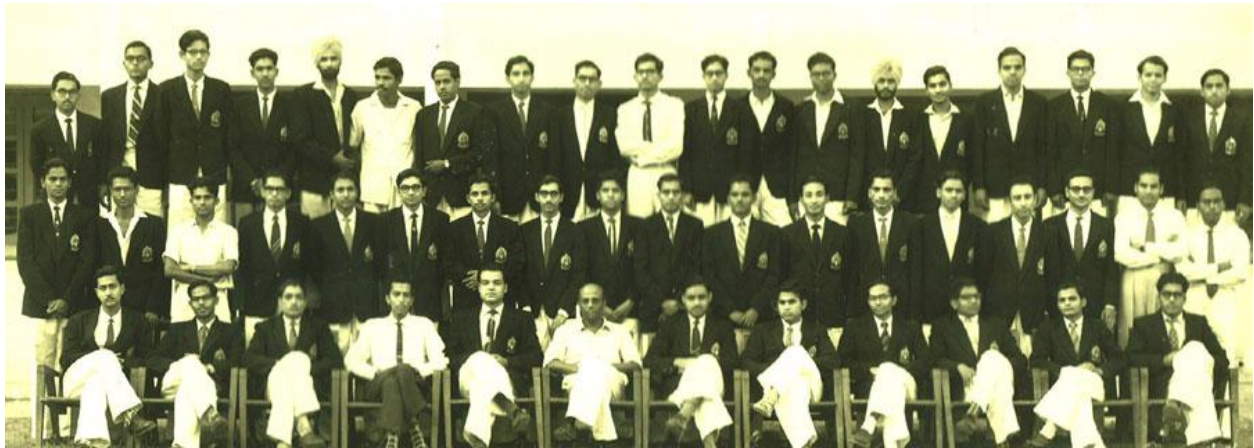




Outgoing students of Eden Hindu Hostel, 1957

### Intermediate Examination in Science





Outgoing Students of RP Hall, 1961



**IIT Degree**





# Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur

Upon the recommendation of the Academic  
Council hereby confers the degree of

## Bachelor of Technology

with First Class Honours  
in Mechanical Engineering  
on Indra Ray Sarma  
who has successfully completed the course of  
studies as prescribed under the regulations and  
passed the Final Examination held in May,  
1961.

Given this day under the seal of the Institute  
at Kharagpur in the Republic of India  
The 10th March, 1962.

*S. P. Gupta*  
Director

*B. C. R.*  
Chairman,  
Board of Governors

*K. K. Chakravarty*  
Registrar

# Grade card of IIT, Kharagpor

## INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

KHARAGPUR, W. BENGAL

### GRADE CARD

Name Indra Ray Sharma

Address Sarat Kutir, 11 Panchanantalla Road, P.O. Bali, Dt. Howrah.

Date of Birth

Registration No. ME/298/57

Course Mechanical Engineering

Subject No.	Subject	TERM						Subject No.	Subject	TERM					
		1st		2nd		3rd				1st		2nd		3rd	
		H/W	Gr	H/W	Gr	H/W	Gr			H/W	Gr	H/W	Gr	H/W	Gr
	<u>FIRST EXAM.</u>								<u>INTER EXAM. (CONTD)</u>						
Hu 101	Humanities.	6	C	6	C	6	C	ME 265	Fluid Mechanics.	5	B	5	A	5	A
Ma 101	Mathematics.	8	C	8	B	8	A	Met 201	Engg. Metallurgy	3	C	3	C	3	B
Ma 102	Mechanics.	6	B	6	B	6	B	ME 263	Engg. Mechanics.	5	B	5	A	5	A
Ph 101	Physics	7	C	6	C	7	C	ME 261	Strength of Mat.	5	C	5	A	5	C
Ch 101	Chemistry	8	C	3	C	8	A	ME 251	Machine Design	5	C	5	C	5	C
CE 105	Engr. Drawing.	7	C	6	B	7	A	ME 251	<u>THIRD EXAM.</u>						
CE 102	Surveying.	2	B	8	B	-	-	Hu 301	Humanities.	2	C	2	C	2	B
ME 121	Workshop Practice	5	B	5	C	6	C	ME 321	Workshop Theory & Practice.	7	C	7	C	7	C
	<u>INTER EXAM.</u>							ME 331	Steam Power & Heat Transfer.	8	C	8	B	8	C
Hu 202	Humanities.	5	C	5	C	5	C	ME 341	Hydraulic Machines	5	C	5	B	5	C
Ma 201	Mathematics.	5	C	5	C	5	B	ME 351	Machine Design.	6	C	6	C	6	C
EE 203	Genl. Elec. Engg.	6	C	6	B	6	B	ME 354	Theory of Machines & Controls I.	4	C	4	C	4	C
ME 221	Workshop Practice	4	C	4	C	4	C	ME 361	Strength of Mat.	4	C	4	C	4	C
ME 231	Engg. Thermodynamics	5	B	5	B	5	C	CE 315	Theory of Structures	6	C	6	C	6	C
ME 351	Machine drawing	5	B	5	C	5	B	EE 302	Elec. Engg. II.	7	C	7	C	7	B





16. Disciplinary Actions-End or Means- August 1976
17. Mr. Supervisor Faces Grievances- September 1976
18. Workmen, your team- February 1977
- C. In **'ISQC Bulletin'**, Calcutta
  19. How Supervisors Build Quality, Volume XIII No.1
- D. In **'Automobile News'**, Bombay
  20. Quality Improvement- a human approach- September 1970
  21. To make it difficult to err- February 1974
- E. In **'Quality'** National Centre for Quality Management
  22. Quality Fads- Reasons of rise and fall- - November-December 1991
- F. In **'PMT-TAP'** Technical Assistance programme
  23. TQM- for you- Why? and How? August 1992
- G. In **'MT&M'** Manufacturing Technology and Management
  24. Latest trends in Gear Manufacturing- an overview
- H. In **'Indian Machinist'**
  25. Standardisation in Manufacturing Engineering
  26. Manufacturing Trends for Crankshaft
- I. In **Mexcel 95**, Bangalore International Conference on Manufacturing excellence-305 August 1995
  27. Manufacturing Excellence and Engineering Education
- J. In **'Advanced Manufacturing Technology'** edited by Prof. SR Deb and Prof. AB Chattopadhyaya , 1997
  28. Automation in Automobile Manufacturing
- K. In International Conference on "The Development of Flexible Automation Systems" in Production Engineering Department, Jadavpur University, March 28-29, 1989
  29. Flexible Manufacturing in Indian Industry

## Books

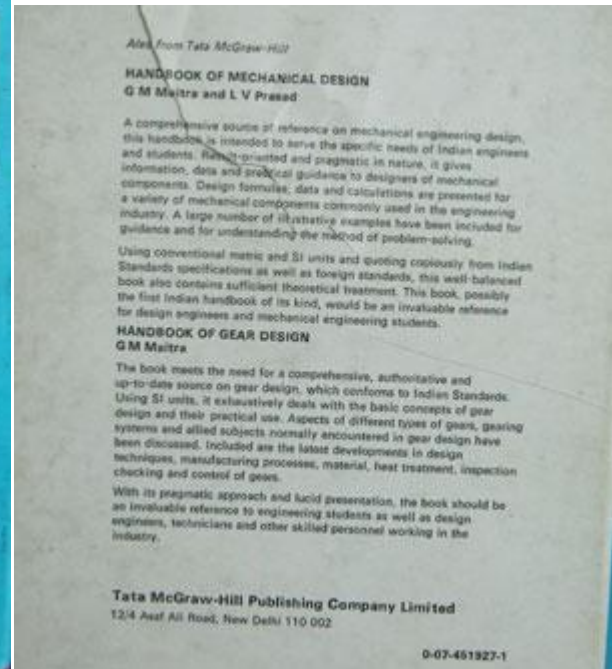
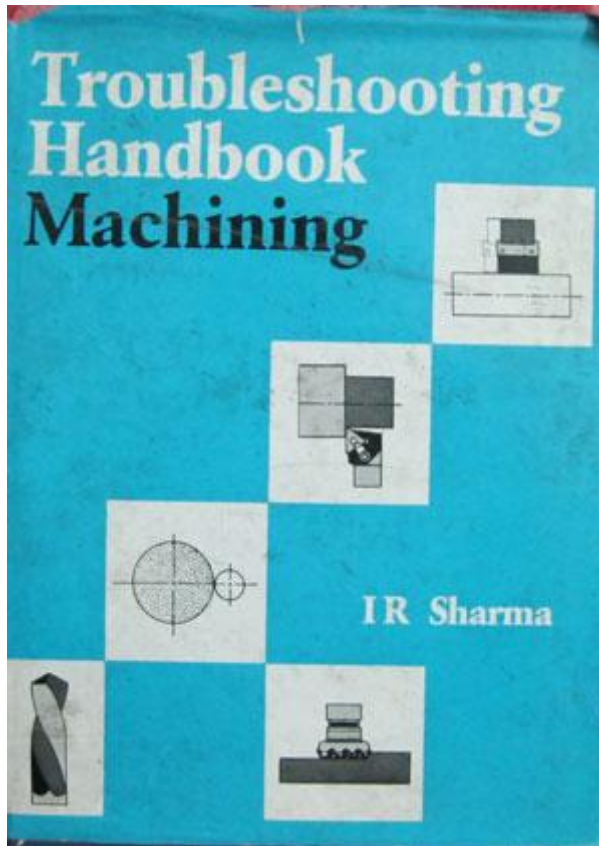
1. **#Mr. Supervisor as Mr. Manager**
2. **Troubleshooting handbook- Machining**
3. **\*A Treatise of Gear Manufacturing**
4. **@Latest Trends in Automobile Manufacturing**
5. **@Latest Trends in Machining**

**# Collection of mostly published articles. Printed and circulated among the supervisors in Hindustan Motors.**

**\*Circulated in industry by invitation**

**@ Available on my website [www.drishtikona.com](http://www.drishtikona.com)**





Cover Pages of Troubleshooting Handbook-Machining



TATA MCGRAW-HILL PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED  
12/4, ASAF ALI ROAD, NEW DELHI-110 002

Phones 273105, 271303  
273711, 265267

Telex : 031-2257  
Grams : CORINTHIAN

February 17, 1988

Mr I R Sharma  
Flat - 4  
EM Colony  
Dist. Hooghly 712 233

Dear Mr Sharma:

It is with pleasure that I attach a cheque for Rs 3624/- as royalty  
for the year 1987 regarding

TRUBLE SHOOTING HANDBOOK

The statement of royalty account is also attached.

Do acknowledge receipt.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

Ranjan Kaul  
Manager  
Business & Professional Books

Encl: Cheque No 608038

REGISTERED OFFICE : BOMBAY HOUSE, TOLMADY STREET, BOMBAY-400023 GRAMS : 'TATAMACRAW' PHONE : 259131  
Dated February 3, 1988



भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान खड़गपुर • INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, KHARAGPUR 72130

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Gram : Technology Kharagpur

Telex : 021-2760 ITKG IN

Phone : (03222) 221-224

From:  
B. C. Majumdar  
Professor and Head

No. ME/E-4/90/3/6  
Date : 5.12.90

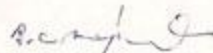
To:  
Mr. I. R. Sharma,  
General Technical Manager,  
Corporate Project Planning  
Hind Motor - 712 233  
Hooghly

Dear Mr. Sharma,

Kindly refer to our letter No. ME/E-4/90/284, dated 15.11.90. Thank you very much for accepting the offer for conducting the viva-voce of M. Tech. students of Mechanical Engineering (Specialisation - Machine Tool Engineering) scheduled on January 15, 1991;

Kindly confirm the date mentioned above and send your travel plan.

Yours sincerely,

  
(B. C. Majumdar)



DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
KHARAGPUR 721302 (INDIA)

Tel: (03222) 2221-2224, Ext 4333  
Fax: +91 (3222) 2303/2896  
Telec: 06401-201 ITKG IN

DR. S. RAMANUJAM  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND ADVISER, MES

*7 Personal*

SR/MES/95/4  
May 19, 1995

Sri LR.Sharma  
General Manager, Corporate Project Planning  
Hindustan Motors  
HINDMOTOR - 712233  
Hooghly, West Bengal

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the students and faculty members of the society, I want to convey our gratitude for your topical seminar talk on "Manufacturing Excellence and Engineering Education". In the midst of a hectic academic schedule with all the uncertainties and choices faced by them, our students are bound to lose their perspective. Senior people like you in premier industries can reassure them and instill a sense of confidence which they will need to face the world as they emerge from here.

What is also hopeful is that the growing awareness of tougher standards is making everybody a little more serious about technical matters, and our students are a little more cautious towards their careers. Our Designer magazine is in the press and you can expect your personal copy shortly.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

*S. Ramanujam*

S. Ramanujam





**IIT, Kharagpur 1961 Batch Alumni Meet at Bangalore, Nov 4, 2011**



**bajaj auto ltd.**

Courier Service

Regd. Office and Plant : Akurdi, Pune 411 035, India  
Phone : 772851, 778151 Cable : AUTOMIKSHA,  
Telex : PN 0146-208 & 263, Fax No. : 0212-773398/771912

ADMN/135/ **5981**

24 OCT 1997

✓ AJIRA ASSOCIATES,  
CJ - 120, Sector - II  
Salt Lake City,  
CALCUTTA - 700 091.

Kind Attn. :- Mr. I.R.Sharma. (Ph.No. 321-8281)

Dear Sir,

This refers to your letter No.NIL dt.NIL addressed to our General Manager (P.E.) giving detailed information regarding your new publication "LATEST TRENDS IN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURING" recently published by you.

Accordingly, we are pleased to place our order for one copy of above publication for our library.

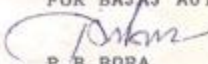
We are enclosing herewith a Demand Draft of Rs. 5,000/- towards the cost of above publication including COURIER CHARGES.

You are now requested to kindly arrange to send us above publication immediately by COURIER SERVICE alongwith your pre-receipted bill for our record & accounting purpose.

Kindly acknowledge with stamped receipt.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,  
FOR BAJAJ AUTO LTD.,

  
P.B. BORA  
OPN.MGR. (ADMN.).

Encl:- Demand Draft No. 125228 dated 22/10/97.