

Chapter 1

Prof. S. B. Ghosh, alias Badal, as I Know Him

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Many readers would start wondering who is this Badal! If I say Badal is none other than Prof. S. B. Ghosh, the readers would understand that I am talking about S. B. Ghosh, the national and internationally acclaimed library and information scientist, now settled in Kolkata (West Bengal, India) after retirement from the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). His full name, Sibabrata Ghosh, may not also be very well known. When he was working in the Geological Survey of India (GSI) Library, at Kolkata, many librarians used to think that he is the younger brother of the Librarian, G. B. Ghosh, because of the near-similarity of their names – G. B. Ghosh and S. B. Ghosh! Badal used to visit regularly, the Bengal Library Association Office, then located at 33 Huzurimull Lane. The senior professionals used to affectionally address him Badal, his pet name. The pet name, therefore, became popular.

Susmita Chakraborty and Anup Kr. Das asked me to contribute an article to the projected Festschrift volume for his honor. After going through the list of suggested topics to select from, I found that I am ignorant about them. I am now an old person of 85, confined indoors, and out of touch with the IT-centric developments in the field of LIS. I am also unaware of the developments that are taking place in other countries across the world. The focus of the topics is “Collaboration in International and Comparative Librarianship.” I read now only professional journals – *Granthagar* and the *Iaslic Bulletin*. After I retired from the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), I cascade to be a functional librarian. In Eenedu, I had to build up the Research and reference Group (RRG), and my task was to undertake news analysis, prepare backgrounds, and write a fortnightly column for publication in the edit page. Although the library was a part of RRG, it was being run by a small group of library professionals headed by

an efficient librarian. I had to work with a group of research assistants. I requested Susmita and Anup to permit me to write about my personal relationship with me and my views about his successful professional career. Badal was close to my late wife Asoka, who has also a professional librarian. He used to address her “Didi” (elder sister). His mother (Mashima) used to treat both of us as her children. When Badal was posted in the regional Office of GSI in Lucknow, Asoka, during her visits to Lucknow used to stay with them. Incidentally, Badal’s wife, Swagata, is an accomplished violinist. Her recital used to be regularly broadcast from AIR (Lucknow, Delhi, and now from Kolkata) Indian Television. Swagata also performed at USA and UK. Swagata’s grandmother Uttara Devi was a distinguished Keertan singer of yesteryears. Susmita agreed saying, “As a historian of LIS evolution in India, it will be great if you can contribute a writing on Prof. S. B. Ghosh and the contemporary LIS happenings.” I am flattered, because she called me “a historian of LIS evolution in India.”

I propose to write about Badal’s education in LIS, his association with two professional organizations, viz., Bengal Library Association (BLA), and the Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centers (IASLIC), his teaching career, and finally his long association with IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, Netherlands).

Badal passed the Certificate Course conducted by the BLA in 1958, and obtained the Diploma in Librarianship in 1961. In 1971, he passed the Associateship course of the Indian National Scientific Documentation Center (INSDOC). INSDOC is now a part of a larger organisation – National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR). This award is known as Associate in Information Science (AIS). The Documentation Research and Training centre (DRTC), Bangalore also offers a similar course which was introduced by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan. It was then the only course of this kind in the world.

These two awards are recognised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) as equivalent to MLIS degree offered by the Indian Universities. Incidentally, this was opposed by departments of LIS of several Universities without success. He obtained the PhD degree from the Jadavpur University. His guide was late Prof. Mukundalal Chakrabarty. This Badal has distinguished academic credentials.

His first professional job was with the Indian Meteorological Department (IHD) as Scientific Observer-in-Charge. I understand that the task needs some acquaintance with library science. Thereafter, he joined the Geological Survey of India (GSI) Library (1963). I was then the librarian of the ICI (India), a British multinational chemical manufacturing company. I was required to collect and collate data relating the geological features of places for exploring feasibility of establishing a manufacturing unit. One example is the selection of the location to construct a factory for manufacturing polyester fiber (trade name “Terylene”) in Bealapar region in the out skirt of Mumbai. This fibre was at one time widely used by the textile industry. Obviously, I had to collect relevant data from the GSI Library. The librarian, late G. B. Ghosh, assigned the task to Badal who did a wonderful job. In fact, the data provided by him, helped the authorities to zero on Belapar region. His sources of information were the journals/serials published by the GSI – *Bulletin of Economic Minerals, Records, Memories and Annual Reports*, and the relevant files in which were recorded the findings of surveys conducted by the Geologists. The factory was named Chemical and Fibres India (CAFI) Limited. The trade name of the Indian product was “Terene.” Belapar is now an industrial hub. The project leader, in a letter addressed to the librarian, profusely thanked him for this valuable help.

After Badal obtained the Associateship from INSDOC, Prof. S. Parthasarathy offered him a senior position; Prof. Parthasarathy was then heading the organization. Badal continued with

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