



## Prof. Yogendra Prasad Dubey [1933-2021]

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The world over, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the untimely demise of many. On 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021, the Indian academia, and particularly the library and information science fraternity, lost Professor Yogendra Prasad Dubey to COVID. Fondly referred to as YPD or Dubey ji or Dubey sir, Prof Dubey had a long and distinguished association with the Department of Library & Information Science of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi.

Born on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1933, Yogendra Prasad Dubey did his BA (1954), MA in History (1956) and Diploma in Library Science (1961) from Banaras Hindu University. He joined as a Professional Assistant in the University Library of BHU on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1961. He was promoted as Professional Junior (Assistant Librarian) on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1963. He did his Master of Library and Information Science from BHU in 1968 and was appointed as a Lecturer in the Department of Library & Information Science, BHU on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1973.

He left for USA in 1980 to do research at the University of Pittsburgh. He collaborated with the luminary Prof. Allen Kent and completed his PhD in 1984. Unlike many others of his time—who generally remained in the USA for better quality of professional and personal lives—Prof. Dubey decided otherwise. Despite his brother and other close family members being in USA, he chose to return to BHU.

He was made a Reader in the Department of Library and Information Science on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1985. The four years in University of Pittsburgh had transformed Prof. Dubey<sup>1</sup>. He enthralled his students with his erudition, energy, and enthusiasm. He became a professor on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1992 and continued in that position till his superannuation in 1993. In view of his outstanding contributions, BHU offered him reemployment for 3 years till 30<sup>th</sup> June 1996<sup>1</sup>.

Prof. Dubey remained an affable teacher who exposed his students to the best in information science and library studies all through.

Most of his students were enchanted with his lectures on library classification and library technologies. Students looked forward to his classification practical sessions, especially those on the ‘Colon Classification’. He taught the rather complex theories advanced by Dr. S R Ranganathan in simple terms using illustrative examples. Through friendly discussions, Prof Dubey introduced the concepts in such a way that over a period, students easily learned the concepts.

He always made it a point that students should also have access to world class library literature, the ones that he used for teaching. He exposed the students to works of Debons<sup>2</sup>, McGarry<sup>3</sup>, Rowley<sup>4</sup>, Toffler<sup>5,6</sup>, to name a few. He was soft spoken in class providing the right variations to stress anything to be stressed and his voice guaranteed a soothing feeling to the attentive learner.

Prasad was impressed by Prof Dubey’s ‘analytical style in subject analysis during practical classes’<sup>1</sup>. Library science then, as is the case today, had students from different disciplines and backgrounds. Prof Dubey with his deep knowledge and wisdom carried along every student with him, impressing one and all. He believed in engaging the students in discussions and allowing them to think aloud rather than spending more time on delivering lectures himself. He was a “teacher with little ego and devoid of any complexity, which made him more popular among the students”<sup>1</sup>. He was a person of high integrity who did not believe in preaching and delivering sermons and but believed in practicing and setting examples<sup>7</sup>.

He dressed well in winters, donned simple attire in summer and cycled his way around the campus. He

practiced simple living and high thinking, and never believed in shortcuts<sup>1</sup>. He was religious but not dogmatic and he always kept humanity above parochial caste feelings. He was nobody's man but liked and loved by everybody. He was transparent and open and never hesitated to discuss anything and everything in class but always maintained his sophisticated persona to keep the discussion from going astray. Though busy with academic endeavors, he was always accessible to students. As the Head of the Department, he was always impartial.

Prof. Y P Dubey's connection with BHU goes beyond his teaching and learning. In the formative years of the Banaras Hindu University—that is even before India's independence—Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the visionary founder of the university had sought grants from kings of many of the Indian princely states in building the University. The alumni of this unique residential university played supervisory and managerial roles in building modern temples of India, the dream of its first prime minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Prof. Yogendra Dubey's family gave up their property including their house for the proposed campus of the university. Such was the dedication of the family for the cause of education.

A list of Prof. Dubey's papers is given in Annexure I. He guest edited a special issue of *DESIDOC Bulletin of Information Technology* [16 (4) (1996)] on 'Expert Systems in Library and Information Science'. He organized an international conference in association with the Computer Engineering Department of the then Institute of Technology, BHU (now Indian Institute of Technology, BHU) in 1992, perhaps first by a library science department in the country. The department which was functioning in few rooms of the Faculty of Sanskrit got shifted to its own new building when he was heading it. Gupta considers him as a scholar who does not boast about his knowledge, a soothing and pleasing personality, a good communicator, a teacher aware of his responsibility to train and guide new generation of professionals<sup>8</sup>. A festschrift volume was released in his honour in 2013<sup>9</sup>.

His house was the abode of many of his students who went to him with problems and issues and walked out contented and smiling. He "enjoyed being in the library reading books of great minds" and "considered a library as a treasure trove of

knowledge, not simply a place where books are stored"<sup>10</sup>. Prof. Dubey will always be remembered as a father figure, dedicated teacher, renowned researcher, guiding senior; and concerned guru by many of his students.

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## Annexure I: Selected Papers authored by Professor Y P Dubey

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