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Memories, Memories and More Memories!

Birla Balika Vidyapeeth holds such fond memories for me. I can say, with all honesty, that those four years were some of the best years of my educational life, even though we were away from home for the first time. I was there from class 7 to class 10, the year 1956-1959, when the school was relatively young, having been opened only in 1941 by Sri Ghanshaym Dasji Birla. Our father was a chief chemist in Birla Sugar factory in Seohara, the reason why we sisters came to be sent there for education. Our elder brother went to intermediate college there.

I remember the school gates and the building, our kind headmistress Mrs. Kaul, our senior warden Mrs. Kuttu, our next warden Krishna Bahanji. The fountains in front of the school building were made in our time, designed by our Arts teacher, if I remember correctly.

My passion for gardening that I inherited from my father was nurtured by Vidyapeeth, where we used to grow vegetables and sell them to the mess hall and were paid in points. The House with most points won. I also learnt to swim at BBVP. I still try to swim once or twice a week. We were taught to be self-reliant, we washed and ironed our own clothes on Sunday and cleaned our rooms.

I joined NCC at BBVP, mainly because we were taught to shoot rifle, I was a pretty good shot, and had a good plate of 'Nashta' at the end of each session. I still remember the samosas and gulab jamuns from those plates! I think we went to Mount Abu one year for a NCC camp.

Marching was a big thing at BBVP. We used to take part in March Past every January and August in the main Campus grounds. I remember being selected to do the Slow March in front of the then Defence Minister Mr. Krishna Menon. It was pretty nerve-wracking, but a proud moment!

Food in Vidyapeeth was pretty good, especially the Alu Kachauries we got on Sunday. I never did find out the recipe for that, still looking! Sometimes, we used to go out into the desert in our school bus. I remember our bus getting stuck in the sand once and people from school having to come to get us out! I also remember being taken out for an occasional night walk in the open desert behind the school play grounds walls. We learnt to march, cycle and play other games in this ground.

My elder sister, who also went there, had Home science as one of her chosen subjects. I remember going to her class after her cooking session and enjoying the fruits of her labour. She was in the Pilani Band and went to Delhi. I think that was the first year BBVP Band attended the parade. My younger sister was there for one year only.

Vidyapeeth gave us sisters good grounding in all subjects, making us capable of whatever we chose to do later on. I became a doctor and now live in UK. I still have the BBVP badge somewhere, probably hidden in some drawer. I don't remember any teacher ever being unkind to me. I basically had a good time there and always think of my time there fondly.