
My Favorite Books

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Reading has always been an integral part of my life, a habit nurtured since childhood by influential figures and cherished memories. This narrative takes you back to my early years, exploring how my reading journey began and the writers who left an indelible mark on my literary preferences.

During these visits to the college library with my aunt, I discovered the three volumes of “Raja Malaya Simha” by Sri Srinivasacharya, the Kannada version of ‘The Count of Monte Cristo’ by Alexandre Dumas. My aunt encouraged me to note down interesting and inspiring sentences, leading to my first favorite quote, which inspires me till date:

“Until the day when God will deign to reveal the future to man, all human wisdom is contained in these two words — ‘Wait and hope.’”

This experience sparked my interest in English classics. My sister further fuelled this interest by giving me “Far from the Madding Crowd” by Thomas Hardy. I became so engrossed in the novel that it transported me to the imaginary world of Wessex, making me an ardent admirer of Hardy. I later learned that famous novelist R. K. Narayan was inspired by Hardy to create his own fictional town, Malgudi!

Growing up in a house frequented by one of India’s most beloved authors, R. K. Narayan, is a cherished memory for me. The friendship between R. K. Narayan and my uncle, Dr. H. S. Biligiri was more than just a casual acquaintance. Their shared interests and mutual respect for each other’s work created a bond that brought Narayan frequently to our home. In his autobiographical work ‘My Dateless Diary’, R. K. Narayan makes a notable mention of Dr. H. S. Biligiri. R. K. Narayan’s father was a schoolmaster in the DURGIGUDI extension of Shivamogga, which was probably the inspiration for R. K. Narayan to name his fabled town ‘MALGUDI’. As far as my knowledge goes, this mythical town Malgudi is a combination of MAL from Malenadu and GUDI from Durgigudi.

I am aware that reading for pleasure has profound benefits on a child’s education, social and cognitive development, well-being, and mental health. American writer and illustrator Tomie de Paola aptly said, “Reading is important because if you can read, you can learn anything about everything and everything about anything.” Unlike videos, which have limitations, reading allows for a deeper exploration of subjects, fostering a greater understanding and retention of knowledge.

Reading also enhances empathy. When we read a book, we get absorbed in the story, experiencing the lives and emotions of the characters. This ability to empathize with fictional characters translates to real-world empathy, helping children understand and relate to the emotions of others.

In this context I must mention the impact the Dr. Shivarama Karantha’s book ‘Marali Mannige’ had on me. This again was my sister’s text book in her BA course. The travels and travails of the protagonist in the novel influenced

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me for changing thinking patterns in various generations spread over. Consequently, such reading significantly contributes to social development, more so in the case of managers in MNCs who will have to manage transnational employees coming from various cultures.

Reading has profoundly influenced my social awareness and professional decision-making. Several books, such as “Madiddunno Maharaya” by Sri M. S. Puttanna, have instilled in me the understanding of the concept often referred to as ‘karma comes back.’ This idea has shaped my ethical framework and personal philosophy.

Dr. Shivarama Karantha’s books have been particularly enlightening, offering deep insights into the social structure and the diverse aspirations of people from different strata of society. These narratives have broadened my perspective on social and cultural outlooks, which proved invaluable during my watch marketing days. While novels in vernacular helped me largely in understanding our own people, the empathy created by reading novels of English, other European and American authors helped me largely in understanding international customers. Understanding the varied backgrounds and behaviours of people helped me craft more inclusive and effective marketing strategies. But one big lesson I learnt from my readings is that people could be different, their countries could be different but the sentiment is always same.

Moreover, these literary experiences have heightened my sensitivity towards the behaviours and thoughts of individuals, as vividly depicted in numerous novels. This knowledge has been instrumental in my role as a manager, allowing me to consider the overall impact of my decisions on all stakeholders. It has fostered a more empathetic and holistic approach to leadership and management.

I am grateful to all those who nurtured my love for reading, a passion that remains with me to this day. Reading has not only enriched my knowledge but also shaped my personality and social understanding. The writers who captivated me in my early years continue to inspire me, reminding me of the timeless power of literature.

I will continue to share my trust with literature and the impact they had on my professional life, at later stages of my life, in the days to come.