**Bapoo Burjorji Mama (1924-1995)**

B. B. Mama ‘Bapoo’ as he was popularly known was one of India’s popular statisticians. He made his name and fame more particularly for accuracy. He took great care to be accurate and would go to considerable lengths to secure and check the minutest of details. Inaccuracies and incomplete information in newspapers, would upset him and he would run from pillar to post seeking the correct scores. He made minute notes of all happenings single handedly and checked them with newspaper periodicals and annuals on a day to day basis.

Apart from statistics he possess a beautiful flair for writing and the text attracted many including non-statisticians. As a matter of fact he used to also contribute to newspaper on politics, films, war and various other subjects.

He combined his twin talent to present statistics in readable, even engaging fashion in the many columns he wrote under captions like “Follow em’ with BBM”, “Figures are fun”, “Factfile” and “Down memory lane”. This led to draw many youngsters into statistics.

When Sportsweek ceased publication in 1989, Sportstar immediately lost no opportunity and ask him to continue with the same titles in their editions, which he did with the same spirit and kept the readers hooked. Such was his influence on the readership.

His passion for cricket statistics started in 1954, four years before statisticians were required to assist radio commentators. When Test matches began to be telecast on the national channel Doordarshan in 1972-73, Mama became the first statistician to assist the new media and that he remained there for nearly two decades is a tribute to his awesome ability.

Mama was born in Bombay on April 8, 1924. During his early days, he was rated as an outstanding student of English and ranked first in English during his schooldays with New Bharda High School (1932-1939) and St. Xavier’s College (1939-1943) in Bombay. He graduated with history and economics from Bombay University. After finishing his studies he went to Calcutta and joined BB Nadodwala & Co. for a while and came back to Bombay as representative of Calcutta’s Merchants and Shipping Co. Later he worked as an office assistant in the Executive Engineer’s secretariat PWD Govt. of Bombay.

Finding the job boring, he joined British Institute of Technology as an advisory correspondent. But this was cut down as he was hospitalized during 1948-49 for a lung ailment which forced him to move along with his wife, Mani to Panchgani’s Bel Air Sanatorium of the Indian Red Cross Society. Here Major Watkins, the superintendent sensing Bapoo’s talent and integrity made him Personal Assistant and Confidential Secretary. Later he was put in charge of the stores department which looked after catering, building materials. He worked there till his retirement, but was so absorbed in his work that he was allowed to stay on at the sanatorium.

Being away from Bombay was also a handicap as there were few in Panchgani, Maharashtra with whom he could discuss and share cricket, his first love. Mama overcame it by developing friendships with like-minded enthusiasts all over the world through correspondence. His letters were beautifully handwritten or neatly typed and had a human touch. His letters were always a source of inspiration and he was always prompt in his replies.

It was here at Bel Air, in Panchgani, that this writer first met Bapoo. It was a great experience as on the day of check-out from my hotel, there was total ‘Bandh’ announced including transport owing to the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. With no option, he re-visited Bapoo and before he could utter a word he accommodated us and provided warm hospitability.

Unfortunately, though BBM prolifically contributed to books, magazines, newspapers and annuals, he never published a book on his own.

He died on March 18, 1995 at the Bombay Parsee Hospital following a short illness and intestinal complications, aged 71. In his tribute in Mid-Day, Anandji Dossa recalled, “At no time did any commentator fail to use his valuable information. He hardly disappointed anybody who sought information.” This writer gained much from him for the last three decades and above all he will miss Bapoo’s warm friendship.