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But for vagaries of Governmental regulations

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My early childhood was spent in a small village, Kadayam, in Tirunelveli district, deep inside Tamilnadu. I was lucky enough to have very inspiring mathematics teachers right from my school days. Their encouragement kept up my fascination for that subject. A major turning point was my shifting to Bombay for my college education. My cousin, P.S. Subramanian, was working in the Solid State Electronics group of T.I.F.R and through him, I came to know about T.I.F.R. and in particular the School of Mathematics.

I was fortunate enough to have very inspiring and encouraging teachers, also in Bombay, both in the B.Sc. at S.I.E.S College, Sion and also in the M.Sc. at Bombay University. An important teacher was Prof. Rangachari of T.I.F.R. who taught us Complex Analysis in M.Sc. He brought out the beauty of that subject in his lectures so well that I started to consider doing research in that subject.

Coming from a traditional background, my first choice after B.Sc. as well as M.Sc. was to look for a clerical job in a bank.

Fortunately I was not able to secure any bank job at that time in Bombay because I did not qualify for a domicile certificate in Maharashtra. The next option was to apply to T.I.F.R. for research. I was selected for the TIFR-IISc joint mathematics programme on Applications of Mathematics, at IISc Bangalore. My parents were very supportive all along and encouraged me to take up research. But for the vagaries of governmental regulations, I might not have been part of the mathematics community!

When I got the INRIA Scholarship to do my thesis in Paris, France my parents although a bit hesitant initially, allowed me to go abroad in spite of the social and family pressures. I had a very fruitful stay in Paris for nearly 3 years. After my thesis, I returned to the Bangalore centre of TIFR. A little later, I spent a year as a post-doctoral at California Institute of Technology, and then returned to the T.I.F.R. Centre, Bangalore, where I am working today, thoroughly enjoying teaching and my research in differential equations.

After my return to India from France, I married Anil Kumar, from the Physics department, IISc. He was supportive and encouraged me, so we both could continue to work hard and also organize our travels within and outside India without much trouble to our little daughter, Vasudha, with my parents' support. I was completely devastated when I lost him recently. It was very difficult for me to come to terms with this loss for quite some time. My daughter, parents, students and friends have helped me to get back to life, and I am here once again enjoying my work.