

The Win

That night she could not sleep. It was the innocent face of the two girls that haunted her. It was not right to make them face all this. Her guilt increased and she felt being tortured mentally. It was really too difficult to do the right, to follow the right path. And who besides her knows this better.

It has all started with Poona telling Karishma innocently that something was going seriously wrong in the College and Karishma has told her that.. later, thinking it was part of her duty to let her know about it. She was the course director and Poona and Karishma were faculty members associated with her course. She took quick notice and called an urgent meeting with the two of them.

They told her that the newly made auditorium on the College top was being given on rent to outsiders on per night rental. And that no check was being kept on who books the auditorium and why? And also of what happens at night inside the auditorium. They also told her that a student has told them about all this and he has also told them to be little cautious

while coming in the evening to the college. And that they have heard the name of Mr. Bhisham, a very senior and influential person involved directly in this process. Poona also told her that one evening when she reached the College gate after her class to go back home, she saw three cars outside College gate, out of which boys and girls (all outsiders) were coming inside and what seemed was that... they were drunk. They were not even stopped by the gatekeeper. And, that the Canteenwala who runs the Canteen at the College Top, used to make the key of auditorium available to them... the outsiders.

She was shocked to hear this. She was one of the old members of the College and she knew very well that some property dealers were holding major posts in the College and their only aim was to make money. And that... at least the two girls believed it was all, true. She was shocked because if all that she has heard was true, how could they dare to risk the security and the discipline of the College.

She thought about her course and her duty. Some of the classes were held even in the afternoon and evening. And it was her responsibility to make sure that the students and faculty members were safe.

But how can she assure that under these circumstances. Although there was also a discipline team in the College but some of the members were either newly appointed who were trying to adjust themselves in College setup or were those who were close to Mr. Bhisham? So, she did not have much hope that they will do something about this. She thought about Bhisham. He was a family man now, with his wife also in the College. But he was the person on whom College Principal had blind faith. Actually, College Principal used to give son like trust to Mr. Amrit, who was his old student and also his right hand and Bhisham was Amrit's close friend.

Now, what if she tried to stop all this....

What if Principal had known about all this? How will he react to it? Inquiries will take place, name of Bhisham will surface, and all the influential people will become her enemies. The fears started surrounding her.

And what if she did nothing to stop this? Ignored all this and made the two girls keep their mouth shut and eyes closed. What will happen then? What if something happened due to this, maybe some harm to anybody, of her course, of her College? The

College was more for her, like her home. And she will not tolerate it being sold... to outsiders. And she repeated, "I will follow the right path, and God will help me and God is enough for me". Her fears started disappearing. She knew her right path. In dark and light things become different. No darkness is able to stand in light, she thought. She will bring things to light and this will make the things different.

She went to the discipline committee first. They listened to her and...they all kept quite. She waited for a day. Some action will be taken now, she hoped. Nothing happened.

Next day she went to the Principal's room. She told him very officially about all that she has heard and requested him to conduct an enquiry into the matter and do something to ensure a safe environment at the College. She felt relieved at the moment, not really aware of what will follow next. But.... this led to the rush of unexpected events, unexpected not only for her but also for the others in College.

At night she received a phone call, from Poona. Bhisham and friends had gone to Poona's house and now Poona's brother has insisted her to back out

and that she will not agree in front of anyone that she has ever talked to anyone in this matter. It was after all for the sake of her job. “Madam why did you let me into all this...”, that was the last sentence from Poona that she heard and knew what all was going to come in her way. She was alone.

A retired person, Dr. Chakarwari was made head of the enquiry committee. He was an old man with all white hair, more than eighty years of age, and all very respectfully thought him to be the doctor of converting black to white and white to black. So, the gentleman started the process with taking a meeting of which she was told to be the part of. In strict tone he announced that Poona and Karishma were being removed. She tried to resort, for she wanted to stand by the girls. She was still their Course Director. And she felt it was her right to know why their jobs are being snatched. It was with the order of highest authority, the gentleman replied and so no reason was necessary to be given. All present were ordered not to gossip, else the same action would be taken against them.

The meeting was over. She came back to her room. She found Poona and Karishma crying and blaming

each other. On seeing her they quickly left the room. That night Karishma's parents came searching her home address. They wanted to know if their daughter had done anything wrong. They told her that Karishma had worked hard for this job. She assured them and said that they should be proud of their daughter and that she was a hard working girl. The next day, the two girls were called again. For hours, they were in Mr. Amrit's room. Writing undertakings, witness notes and God knows what...but definitely what Mr. Amrit and friends desired.

She met them while walking down the stairs. Their faces were red but expressionless, and beyond that she could clearly see the hatred for her... the hatred of putting them into all this. What followed consequently was that she was also removed from the post of Course Director and transferred to another department. And the two girls were also transferred to some other department. And all that happened with the Principal's order.

She felt the change. Her chair, her room, her position, myth..., was all removed. It was like she was to be severely punished for some unknown

crime; maybe it was also documented that way by the help of Enquiry Committee in Mr. Amrits files.

In the coming days there were Mr. Bhisham and friends, laughing at her with the statements like ... “We snatch the work and make the people sick..., so that they get frustrated and leave.”. These statements were not at all needed for her. She has been in the College for years and seen such examples where people have left even their permanent post when such conditions were given. She ignored. If she is right, God will give her the strength and in front of God, no one has the power. She searched herself for fears. She found none.

Then she saw the change. The Canteenwala was removed first; although she knew it was only temporary. This was followed by the change of security. All guards were changed. But nobody discussed anything with her after that. Another post, rather insignificant was given to her but on the surface with a small increment in allowance.

But she was happy. At least, the discipline of the College has become better,...or now the guards kept the check on without permission entry of outsiders. They have also learnt the lesson, that whatever

happens, it was they who were to be blamed for not performing their duty. And now the College auditorium was being used for better reasons.

The only regret that remained with her was that Poona never talked to her. However, Karishma was a bit different. She used to wish her with smile whenever she saw her in the corridors. Poona on the other hand kept increasing the distance from her. Greeting apart, she never even looked at her. And she knew why... It was hatred. And it was God know what; that did not let her to speak with Poona either. It was nearly six months when she received a card. A wedding card! Poona was getting married. She was going and she will not come back. She felt the time was going out of her hands. She has to say sorry. Poona was once the little sister to her as part of her team. And how can she let her go.., into her new world, her new life with hatred for her. She walked fast...ran...and found Poona in the Administration Office. Poona was completing the official formalities required for leaving the institute. She waited for her at the door. Then suddenly Poona was at the door. She looked at her; at her after a long, long time. She wanted to say sorry, but she felt her throat being

choked. Instead she caught hold of Poona's hand. In the second moment there was Poona who was crying badly, putting her arms around her. "Madam, please forgive me, I have done very bad for you. I could not stand the pressure..., at the enquiry", Poona cried badly. Suddenly she felt relieved. It was not hatred for her that had kept Poona at distance, it was 'Guilt'. She took a deep breath. All her regrets were over. Poona was going with love and respect for her in her heart. She has won after all, the fight between the right and wrong.

And she has learnt a lesson herself. It is not all that impossible to stand by the right.

The Cards of Culture and Religion

“There is a Muslim with us who is trying to spread group..ism and that is what we will not permit at any cost”. It was this sentence by the Principal Director that let her to refocus on what was being said. It was in between an urgent staff meeting that was called a day after “The Director Emeritus” had come to visit the College, suddenly, after a long time, and nobody there knew for what? ... but yes, in the absence of Principal Director. He had also come to her room, where she had stood up in respect and had wished him, remembering he was the founder of the College and Principal at the time when she had joined there six years back. After that “The Director Emeritus” had called a meeting where he had made his presence felt, scolded the staff members, and clearly indicated that he was not satisfied with the current working atmosphere of the college. He had also called the Principal Director using his mobile during the meeting, but had left before he came. Later, that day she had known that Principal Director had not approved his visit. And there were

those who had surrounded Principal Director, talking with enthusiasm, expressing their loyalty to him against the Director Emeritus. It was at that time that her wishing “Good Morning” to an elder having white hair was equated to be a sin.

And now this was the meeting that she was attending. The Principal Director has started with asking “Who among the faculty members was passing information to Director Emeritus? When nobody answered, he continued. She was also sitting there wondering what had happened between both the Directors. They had been known for showing the behavior like the father and the son in the past, now what has happened? She knew that Director Emeritus was a very influential person and now if the things were not good as before, it was the cause of worry for the Principal. But all staff members were with him, all including her, she thought. And if they all were doing their best, best for the College, with obviously as per the orders of the Principal, how can someone’s perspective change the things. She was in midst of her thoughts when something being said about Muslims made her to refocus. She was a Muslim and there were two others from the Library

who were there in the meeting. Then she remembered about the office girl, Lisa, who was known to be in good books of Principal Director, but she was absent that day. So, there were all together four Muslims in the College having a staff of more than a hundred, where the three were on adhoc posts and she realized then, that she was the only permanent one.

“We should be careful”, Principal Director was continuing. “There should be something why people are not trusting Muslims all around the world”, he was saying. “A Muslim from our staff told another Muslim to keep a track of what was happening in my room.” “So, you will come here and spy?”...He then looked at her. She felt shocked. Why was he not naming the person? Why is he putting somebody’s blame on the whole community?

“Muslims are famous today for spreading terrorism”, he was saying. She started to get angry now. She tried to speak, but was stopped. The Principal now came again on the previous agenda. Now he was talking to his most trusted men. “Agar Chaar log Kisi Ko Utha kar phenk Dein College ke ooper Se Neeche, *(What if four people throw somebody down the top*

floor of the College?) Then what will happen? Nothing will happen. Police will come and everybody will say we didn't see anything."

She was now too shocked to feel even the anger. She wondered, "For whom was it being said? For someone who was a Muslim or The Director Emeritus!

Shortly after that the meeting was over. The Principal Director went back to his room. And she went after him. With permission she entered his room. "Kindly tell me Sir, who that Muslim is? Who is that who asked to spy on you? I know there are not many Muslims here, and I think it is not right to blame the whole community for one person."

She clearly said that. Soon there came his favorite men. They came and sat there, as if they didn't need the permission. "It is you. You have asked Lisa to spy on me and she has told me that", he told her.

"What!" she exclaimed. What the hell they were trying to do! And why were they using her name? Why was she being blamed? Why was she being framed for something that was beyond her thought?

"I don't do these things, Sir." "Don't you know me?"

"I have always given my faithfulness to this chair of

yours”, and why will I need to do this?”, she said that in spite of the fact that she felt if she was wrongly being blamed, there was no need for giving the explanation.

Then there were his men taking to her. “Why should we trust you? Lisa has given us in writing. And that it is you Muslims who are doing all the terrorist activities around the world”, one of his men was in the mood of fighting. She had to answer that, she felt.

“You stop raising you voice against me, and do that instead to condemn terrorism”, she said, sternly. “I use blog postings to denounce all the activities that lead to people’s sufferings, but have you done something in this regard, except fighting with me?”, she added. “I know she is different from others”, the Principal said to his men and tried to cut off the talk. As Lisa was not there the talk had to end that day.

Back in her room she analyzed the sequences that had happened. Why was all this happening? She was aware of her competitors, and those who didn’t approve her. And they were many. But they were always there in all parts of her life.

She thought about Lisa. Lisa came from a very poor family, where there were too many kids to feed and only one earning member, Lisa's father. Last month Lisa's mother had died after two month long struggle on the ICU bed of a private hospital. And she was the elder one. The College had provided the poor girl the support in her bad times as that situation would have been very tough for her, everybody had known that.

But, they were saying that Lisa has given in writing something she knew was not true.

Why will Lisa do that to her? She wondered. She has always stood by her when her mother was sick, when her mother had died, when she was in pain. She knew well that people who are poor and weak are used, often bought to make scenes against their own community, and this was the easiest game played by powerful against powerless people and now she knew that the card was being played against her. In spite of that realization, it was very difficult not to trust Lisa. Lisa was by birth a Muslim, may be for namesake, though her name also didn't reflected her being a Muslim. It was only the time when Lisa's mother was sick that she had

shown her need to know Allah. Lisa has then come to her crying, and told her she wanted to pray, pray to Allah for her mother's health. She has then told her, what she has always herself believed in, that Allah listens if you pray with your heart and when Lisa has asked her to give her some prayer written on a piece of paper, she has given her a prayer containing Allah's names. The only thing that she has thought about at that time was how to help poor girl gain strength in her worst time. And now she wondered over what has come in return to her.

Next day, Lisa had come to the College. And she has asked her why she has told that lie to Principal Director. Lisa has straight away refused and said, "I didn't say anything about you Maam, to anybody". Then she has gone to Principal Director again and told him that she has already talked to Lisa and that he can call her and remove whatever misunderstanding he had about her. This time the principal had reacted very badly and had refused to talk further about this matter.

She didn't know what to do. Whom to trust and whom not to trust? She looked back.

She was born in a Muslim educated family. Her parents were pious people, both teachers, who have always believed in the need of right education. They have sent her to the best school in the city, a Christian School. She had been the only Muslim child there throughout from LKG to tenth. And today she realized that all her teachers and friends were Hindus! She has just then realized that they were also Hindus who had loved her dearly; whom she had herself loved dearly, whom she will always trust ... beyond words. It was however a sad fact that the communal riots were part of the continuing history of India, but these were also the times where people can form opinion that can stand for Hindu-Muslim unity through out their life, she thought. She remembered her friend Renu. Once when her city was rioting, Renu had holded her hand while coming from school and had brought her home showing the way between the temples, when Renu had felt it was not safe for her to go home via the main road. She also remembered the days when she was a college student. And her teacher, who was closest to her heart even that day, was her Preeti Madam.

When she had joined the College, things were not as difficult for her as they had become in the past two-year. It was from the time in 2003 when the new Principal Director had taken the seat. It had suddenly come in form of the culture and values strengthening and in the form of faculty development programs. She had seen a number of changes since then. Hawans have become a routine activity in the College. The naked walls were painted with Shlokas to give the College, a temple like look. Faculty members were sent for new age religious programs, which were run in form of health or in the name of holistic learning. And these programs were also made the part of internal College routine. And often the organizers made sure that she was the important participant, especially when some Sadhu came to introduce his way of education. It was then she had started to resist, resist from all things that she considered was against her Iman, where worshipping only Allah was allowed. It was then she has started refusing all invitations for Hawans. It was then she refused to chant Shlokas in the name of Yoga. It was then she avoided sitting with Sadhus who often came to introduce their programs for she knew that

her photo would be hanged as motivation for others. It was this resisting, that made others feel strange about her, for the other three Muslims have already submitted themselves to the new change. It was then some senior faculty members had surfaced and frankly asserted that if someone couldn't mold into their ways, the person should be removed. It was then she had started feeling insecure. It was then she had realized she has to find her own ways, the right answers. But Allah is with her and He will help her in this, she had thought every time, when she felt alone. She was not really lonely, for there were some friends, friends who have suggested, "Why don't you leave the job here and go to some Muslim University?", and then added "It will be better for you there". But she knew it was not all true. She also knew that when it was a matter of competition, people try to over power others, and had at times not considered even the people from their family, what to talk about religion. It was after all a competition game being played every time by a different name. She had replied, "I have been taught by all Hindu teachers for fourteen years... and I owe them my Guru Dakshina. I can't pay them that for

all the love and knowledge they have given me, but I will try to return that to the next generation, by serving with love in this College, giving all the knowledge without bias, for atleast fourteen years". She smiled. She has got her answer. She knew the only way to win this game from those who spread hatred, or those who didn't want to give her the right to exist, was to return "words of love" and "deeds of love".

As the Principal Director had brought the issue to the front, in front of all staff members in the meeting, some started playing games in the open. Some even felt it was their way of showing loyalty to the authorities.

It was then she had noticed, a peon who distinctly wore a big tilak and saffron clothes, forgot to say "Good Morning", and started saying "SalamAaalekum" with loud voice. So, they have forgotten everything about her, except of course her religion, she realized.

She was ordered to be moved to the new staff room. The reason that was announced was "like people should sit together". She went to the new room gladly. There she found an empty table and chair

place for her. And on her table was placed a big statue of Ganesha. That statue she had not noticed before, although she had often gone to that room. She felt uneasiness. Where to place her purse? Should she shift the statue or not? Whether to touch it or not? She instead holded the purse in her lap and sat cautiously moving the chair somewhat far from the table. Soon one of the Principal's men came there. He came and with joined hand bowed before Ganesha. He called the peon loudly "Table halke sarkana, Ganesh Ji ka dhayan rakna", he ordered him. Although he looked at her, smiled mischievously and left. She new, "It was the part of the game they were playing with her, but what was their next move?" Were they really trying to create a situation for something that was beyond her imagination? The only thing that she was sure about was that everything that they will do or create will belong to "Culture" and that "needs the strengthening" and whatever she will do will be "Religion". She tried to prepare herself for their next moves. The quite answer was to go and sit somewhere else. She returned back to her old room. Fortunately for her the place where she was

previously sitting was too congested for others to gladly occupy.

After two days, she went to call somebody from the room where Ganesha's statue was placed. The statue was not there. Her eyes were searching it. Yes, it was there. Placed on the old Almirah top, half hidden behind the old files.

They kept on playing these games with her, and for some this has become a war. She kept on avoiding their moves like she had avoided sitting in the new room. But it was not always easy. There were some who have taken the oath that they will surely bring her to the right path... their "Culture" and she knew well that in this new definition of "Culture" it was fully taken care of that people with even the little identity like hers don't fit. It was again and again announced in all official meeting that the mission of the College has become "culture strengthening", however, without the limit imposed "how to and how much?".

So, people started experimenting with whatever they thought was their style of culture strengthening. A senior member introduced her to one of the dignitaries who have come to attend a function. He

slightly lengthened the pronunciation of her name. She felt like they had been talking about her. The gentleman stood and with folded hands said, “Jai Shri Ram, Jai Shri Krishna”. She smiled “Good Afternoon, Sir”. “Jai Shri Ram, Jai Shri Krishna”, the gentleman repeated loudly and was not ready to accept her style of wishes. Now she had become the focus of all present there. This time she folded her hands in Namaskar form and smiled with respect.

“Jai Shri Ram, Jai Shri Krishna”, the gentleman was looking straight into her eyes now, forcing her to surrender, forcing her to repeat the words with him, trying to use his deliberate brain washing tactics. “What if I repeat the words, and let the man feels happy? It will not make me less devoted to Allah, but why was all this needed after all!”, she thought in the instant of that moment, and said loudly, “Jai Hind, Sir”. Yes, this was the intelligent answer. The gentleman was in a fix. Although he was not pleased... but “Jai Hind” was something he couldn’t refuse to accept in public. Shortly, after that the “culture strengthening”, statements in the new meetings were changed. There was a new addition, which she noticed being frequently added. “It is the

intelligent people who do much harm. Those who do not have the brains are better”.

She has gradually learnt how to reply humbly to the games played with her. And often she enjoyed the moves played to her and especially when somebody played a stupid move. That day in the morning newspaper she read about the high propaganda about some religious text being circulated by a history department teacher of a central university. And that had created the high wave of disapproval within different religious groups and they had come on road to show their discontentment and had made the headlines that day. Now, the poor history teacher was giving explanations that her name was not written on the text and somebody else was framing her, while all knew that the history teacher was a minister's daughter.

In the mist of this news, her College people started playing their new games. It started with Lisa. She found Lisa running after her, “Madam, please stop!”. She stopped. Lisa came running to her.

“Madam, I was looking for you”, she said. “Madam, you have to help me, I have lost that prayer you gave

me when my mother was sick”. “Please write it for me and give that to me again”, she said.

“I do not remember what prayer I had given you”, she replied.

“No, I know the prayer, it is on the Internet also, but please write it in Hindi for me”, Lisa replied.

“If you know it is on the net, try to find out the related sound files, I have lots of work to do today”, she replied hurriedly and left. Lisa was not to be trusted anymore, she knew that, but what she didn’t know was the reason of Lisa’s quick and continuous promotions, and her ability to become highly trustworthy of all the Principal’s men.

It was that same day, an old man came to her room. She recognized him to be the Pandit Ji, the person who performed the Hawan rituals in the College.

“I have been given a new task by Principal Director. He is making a research cell for comparative religion studies and I am writing a book for that. I need your help. In your religion there are different names of Allah. I want you to give me some names, names starting with O, A, M and write their meaning. In fact, I was sitting in Library and I have seen such text on the Internet”, he said and also named a

Muslim in the library who has helped him in searching. Now, he wanted the same text from her. She wondered, if he had already known that whatever he needed was on Internet, why he has not taken a printout of that from the attached printer. So, were these things related? The news, Lisa and him and if this was a game then, who was the player behind this? She thought about herself. Was she being too suspicious? Where has her trust gone? Who was responsible for such feelings of mistrust in her? May be the gentleman really needed that for academic purposes. She really wanted to help him. “Sir, Internet material often contains public opinions, and the information you get from there is often not correct. So, it will be better if you search the material or translations you need from any reliable book”. She guided him about the related books.

However, she was not surprised when Pundit Ji kept coming to her room, daily, for not days, not weeks but months and kept on insisting her to give him some Islamic text, in either her writing or from Internet or anywhere but of course through her hand. And each time he came, she softly refused

him giving one reason or other, she strongly felt that she was right not to trust him.

Then finally came her chance to win. And her win was to end such useless plays.

She was having lunch that day with other colleagues in her room and the lunch was served to her from the College canteen. As she was to finish the lunch she saw that it contained something that was not the supposed mushroom. She exclaimed, "This looks like a meat piece!" This made her colleagues look into the plate. She shifted that with spoon. Yes, it was a meat piece. It was prohibited to bring even the cake having eggs in the College. And she knew that it was the rule. Now, the question was, "How the College canteen served that?" For her it was seeing the breaking of the rules, the rules that she had valued ever since she had joined the College. Although she was a non-vegetarian herself, she has never brought that in College, and has always asserted to her students and team members that College rules should be followed. Now, she wondered, "Why the administration has failed to specify the College's Cultural Code to the Canteen person, and so he had dared to serve that in her

plate.” But what came to her as a shock, was their actions when she reported that to the administration. First they asked her what the problem was, if she was a non-vegetarian herself? “I eat only Halal meat”, she replied adding, “and that too not in the College premise, and don’t you remember it was a rule?” Within minutes she saw him coming. The gentleman with all white hair, he who was known to make black the “white”, and white the “black”, who was always there when some major fault was to be protected or when some innocent was to be framed. And she knew it was all done through enquiries and reporting and all in very professional and official manner. She did not know what happened after that, but the Canteen kept running, without any problem. But something changed for her. People there who felt that she was the protector of their values started to trust her again. And that was something that she had herself needed badly when her own trust was getting hazy. Some even came to explain the reasons, especially the Pundit Ji, who claimed that the reason why Canteen person was given the green signal was

because they were trying to become liberal. But then they stopped playing frequent games with her.

But she kept on praying daily, “Make myself believe and love all those who are near me” and “save are country from all destructive games, all the games people play in the name of Religion, Culture and Liberalization”.

The Dice of Persecution

As she entered the staff room, she heard them talking. The ladies were worried. There was supposed to be the meeting for that course at 2:00 pm, and the Principal will address that. That was in fact the cause of worry for most women folks. And most important cause of worry was that the students would also be present there. It was not that they were at wrong, for they were all good teachers, dedicated to the educational cause. It was because the Principal was in 'mood'.

And she has been hearing that for the past few weeks. Last week, there was Induction Program of a PG course. Induction Program was the welcome function for the new students. The students' parents were also called. The Principal came and started the talk. He talked in mood, and that talk lasted approximately about one hour.

After that few lady teachers have come to her room, and talked to her about the Principal's talk, as she was not there in the meeting.

“Principal Sir, was talking all nonsense”, they said. “You know madam, what he did in the meeting...he said....”, and they narrated her the Principal’s speech, “One day one girl student came to me and asked me to keep the teachers out of the personal lives of the students. The reason was that a lady teacher has recently slapped that girl, as she was caught red handed doing the kissing act with a boy of her class. I asked her how come her teacher came to know about that and how was she doing it and was she doing the “smooching” loudly, “puch, puch, puch”.”

His speech was similar in lines. Some of the parents have left the room saying, “Is this taught in this College!”.

She heard the ladies gossiping and being angry.

“What will the students think? They are all new students? How will we control them? The new boys were all amused and the girls ashamed, they said as it was all that they remembered today.

When one of the ladies narrated that to her directly, she asked, “Why did you keep sitting there and listen and did not walk out of the room?”

“Madam, I tried several times but couldn’t do that as I was one of the Induction Program organizer, ... but madam, today principal sir crossed all limits, it was very embarrassing for all of us, in front of all the students and male faculty members.

“And madam, he also said to the students that we all teachers are useless”, the lady added.

“We women need to realize our tolerance limits and if required, need to fight our own fights”, she told the ladies. She knew their weakness and was also aware of their extra tolerant behavior. They were all cowards. For if any of them was brave enough to at least stop the Principal directly, or at least condemn his speech in public, the Principal would not be in such moods again, at least when that person was in presence. And she knew that it was true. It was why the Principal had control on his speech whenever she was around. She was not sure that he was that much well behaved in her absence, but at least in her presence he remembered the manners. And she has made him remember that.

She remembered the time when she has known him as the new Principal. At that time he seemed to be constantly in the ‘mood’. It was the time when the

teachers were called repeatedly in meetings and the Principal passed remarks, which made them feel humiliated, dishonored, uncomfortable and ashamed. She has then talked to the Principal directly, and told him to stop it, but he was not ready to control his tongue. He was instead surprised about how dare she talked to him regarding this. He has thought that she was just a teacher, like others, at his mercy, for he was Principal, The Great. Instead of stopping he had intensified the meeting, in form of the daily faculty development programs and extensively expressed his moods. He was always throwing the dice of persecution and almost always winning. She has seen the distinguished faculty feeling disgusted and sometimes even leaving the College. She has also seen them lightly throwing away even his most embarrassing remarks, when she has felt that she would rather stand and slap him instead, for that. She was a well-behaved lady and knew that slapping was not the everlasting solution. She went to few respected elder people in the College, elders of his age, elders who themselves thought that it was not right for the Principal to show his mood that way.

She requested them to stop the Principal for it was not good for the College's reputation. They failed to help her. Instead the Principal became more furious and thought to teach her a lesson for her guts. He called her and warned her, "So, you want to make a Union here on women issues; don't you know it is not permitted." The coming days were not easy for her. She was subjected to all sorts of very official changes, making her life difficult. She knew fighting for the Women Cause was not easy. Then one day, the glass of her patience overflowed. That was the day when Principal has called her in the staff meeting and started accusing her. She has then tried to combat. The principal had passed the remark, making fun and smiling, "Look, I have kept her for Entertainment".

That was too much for her. It became unbearable. She was from a respectable family and was sure that her honor was more important than money. But, she has to do something about this. She thought of resigning. Then she thought that although many people have left, but the situation was not changed. If she went away silently, that will be the cowardly act and will make the Principal's intentions strong.

She wanted to find out the way. She thought, ‘two words in writing are sometimes better than twenty words of saying’. And she knew the way ahead.

She wrote an application to the Principal, asking him to kindly explain what he meant by the word “Entertainment” in his remark. She knew that principal would throw it in the dustbin, so she gave it to his office assistant and took a receiving. The matter was now not to be thrown away, she thought. That day she wrote a letter of grievances to the Management forwarding a list of some disgracing remarks of principal director to women faculty members.

The next day she was called and handed over a termination letter. It was a funny termination letter of one line, after her four years of regular service. It stated that the College was pleased with her performance but her services were no longer required from the next month. That was the real proof of the modern day dictatorship, “Surrender or Die”. The next day again she wrote another letter to the Management, stating her service details and asked them to give her future directions in that regard.

In the coming days when she went to the College she saw the change. Most of the women folks were flattering the Principal, literally falling at his feet. They avoided talking to her, terrified that even talking to her will lead to their termination. Some of her 'friends' confided to her, "In meetings, we will not sit with you because then the Principal will be after us". And she realized that she has tried to change the conditions for them but has failed.

She sent the letters by post to the Management. She has also kept the postal receipt of both the letters. However, even after fifteen days there was no response. This time she thought of going to the Management in person. She was told that she has to come by taking prior appointment next time, as the Chairman was busy. And they told her that they were not aware of the letters she has sent. This time she gave them a new copy of her letters and took the management's office's receiving. She came back.

The next day when she went to the College, Dr. Chakarwanti, an old retired professor (kept in the college to make black the white and white the black), was waiting for her. "I want to talk to you", he said. "There is something that is needed to be

communicated to you as ordered by the Management...in private". He said and took her to the conference room. There he told her that he has been specially asked to resolve this matter because if the things will go out they will be bad for the College's reputation and that the Management wants you to take back the allegations."

"Allegations!" she exclaimed. "You know each and every word is true. How can you say that when you yourself was present in all meetings?" she started getting angry.

"Well yes, I know that all this is true, and the whole College knows about it. But, how will you prove this?" he challenged her. "You are trying to fight for Women, but look at them; they are at Principal's feet. Do you think in such situation they will stand by you? They are Principal's slaves and you are alone" He tried to terrify her. But she knew he was right. She has left alone in this fight.

"It is better if you close this issue", he tried to convince her, and said, "... for this the Management has asked you to write a letter stating that it was all a misunderstanding and that the problem is solved between you and the Principal."

She refused. “This is my fight and I will fight alone”, she said sternly.

The white haired gentleman was now quick in changing the move. He was now talking like a saint. “I know you are fighting your own fight, but it is good to forget and forgive.” He picked his mobile phone and called the Principal. The principal came but this time he was not the Principal, the Great.

“I am sorry”, he said. “If ever I have hurt you by my words”. His voice trembled.

The sequence of events that followed were the following...She thought of forgiving the Principal, after all, he was promising to be a good man who will respect women in future, and the Management wanted to shut the case. So, the case was closed. Yes, of course, the Principal had become a good man who respected the woman, only her, that was visible in all meetings that proceeded in the coming years, but for others he was the same. The women there have realized that there was a way to make things right but... they have to decide and take the steps ahead.

The Moves of Fake Posts

“It is in the history of this College that this type of time was always given to people in the name of Fake Posts”, she said and added “They played cards and later left after getting frustrated. It is me who tried to survive in the midst of this trend. And my win is that you have yourself started questioning whether your steps were right or wrong?”

She said that coarsely smiling to a lady who was at a senior post in Administration Department of the College. All sitting in the Administration Department knew that she was true.

Her College valued Autonomy. Autonomy was considered to the extent that they have proved that they can run the college successfully without filling the Post of Professors and Readers as specified by the University, and they have been proving that for last nine years. It was a College that had many Courses, for Post Graduate and Graduate students. Well, everybody there knew about the powers of Autonomy and how easily it can manage all the money and also that ‘Autonomy’ in autonomous

conditions was always for the Powerful. There was no doubt that Principal of the College was the most Powerful there, however the Autonomy was more dependent on the Power of the Powerful. She has seen the change of three principals. She has seen the differences of the Power, but the trend of creating fake posts had remained always the same. She remembered many on those fake posts. She remembered the first fake post, the post with powerlessness. It was the time of the first Principal. She remembered it, as it has happened that day.

She sat in his room and looked at his face. His face was lighted with relief, the relief of escaping from a fake post. He was her immediate boss, the Course Director. She has been associated with him as part of his team, right from the time she had joined the College, three years back. In these few months, she has seen him getting irritated, frustrated, disturbed and sometimes annoyed. He seems no longer the Head she knew, the bright, and the coherent and enthusiastic one; however, she also knew the reason of this change. The relations between him and the Principal were not good from the past few months for

he sometimes tried to use his own head and was sure that he had a head. Both men were there from the beginning of the College and the Course, so there was no prospect of bringing the war between the two in open field. The cold war expressed itself in the form of the discussions and meetings where instead of the Course Director, a lab assistant, Pradeep was called every time and all matters and transactions, important for the Course were carried out, through his hand. She has then recognized the face of a powerless post, a fake post, a humiliating and crushing post. She was fortunate that she was not called as Pradeep, perhaps because she was considered a team member who was too loyal.

That day when she came to the College, she was called in the Course Director's Room. When she has reached his room, there were other team members with him. But today, he seemed happy and announced, "I am leaving and I am joining as the Principal of the M.S. College." It was a new College in the same city, and he had received its invitation that he had gladly accepted in the wake of what he has considered the unalterable circumstances.

She remembered the second fake post. It was the fake post of sham. It was the time of second Principal. She had enjoyed that period in College, as she thought that she was the Principal's trustworthy. In those days the Principal has shown trust on her by assigning her different responsibilities.

And then she thought of that day.

She was called in the Principal's Room where it was announced that she is being made the Assistant Director of her Course. It was the same Course she has been coordinating for the past three years. It was the same Course she was thoroughly familiar with. It was the same Course that she was taking care of after the Academics Director has resigned three months back. She stood and thanked the Principal. She said to herself, "After all, my dedication is realized and Principal has awarded me this way." Few staff members were sitting there and has clapped and made her suddenly feel important.

Principal has asked her to sit after they left. He has then confided, "I have been observing that, how with selflessness and responsibility you have taken care of the Course, even in the absence of the Director

Academics, and I know you will keep on doing the work like this...., in association with your new Director Academics, Mr. Sushil Kohl.”

It was not only the name of Mr. Sushil Kohl that has come, as bewilderment to her; the coming year was also full of confusion.

What is the need of Mr. Sushil Kohl, if he doesn't know A, B, C of the Course?

What is the need of two posts, one of Director Academics and another of Assistant Director, if previously the work was done successfully by one Director and even when nobody was the Course Director?

Why every body in the college was showing the sudden interest in that Course, to insert their opinions in its execution?

Why is she responsible to explain in length to the Director that his decisions were not correct?

And why Principal has chosen a person of 'Advertising and Management' on an effective post of Computer Science Course, when there were people of Computer Science in the College, like her?

She worked in puzzlement for one year. It was not easy, but she kept on showing her dedication to the

Principal and to her Director Academic. She was sure of accepting the change but before the year was to end, the Principal retired.

The next Principal took the seat.

He had the creativity to amplify the Power of the Powerful. Posts started being distributed as seemingly potent titles. The In-charges, Directors, Deans and Advisors were created. This distribution of Posts became recurrent. The titles were snatched mostly without reason and posts were revived with another seemingly influential one. Sometimes this change was initiated as a punishment but later recorded as a privilege. She got the titles of Tutorial Incharge two times. She became Programme Director of two different UG courses, Training Incharge, Director Academics of a UG Course, Director Academics of two PG Course, Research Director and Dean of Research and Development. And all this happened in a period of only four years. This distribution of posts was not only for her but also for others. Before most of the people realized their new seat, the seat was changed again. The post titles lost their meaning and she often realized the meaning of Principal's words, "Love your work and not your

chair". "But can you work sitting on a highly unstable chair?", she often thought. The chairs were not only unstable but had an undefined life. Most of the times there were two chairs with different titles, but for the same work. One of such chairs was the powerless one, especially designed for display, decoration and documentation. The other was the powerful one, for the work, all the work that was confidential, monetary and influential. It was a kingdom where the king sat alone, without the information and the Wazeer carried out all on the king's name. And there was always one to one interface between that Wazeer and the Principal, the Powerful. She has watched this kingdom closely, being mostly, like that king. But there were many kings before her.

She remembered Mrs. Puri. She was invited to join as the Director Academics of a PG course. She was placed on the King's chair. Her Wazeer's chair was at that time given to Miss. Jyotsna. She carried out all that was required, bypassing Mrs. Puri. Ms. Puri stopped coming to the College, said that her work didn't give her the satisfaction. In fact she might have realized there was no work at all.

She remembered Mr. Rakesh. He was invited to join as the Director Academics, after Ms. Puri. He was placed on the King's chair. The Wazeer's chair was then given to the Associate Director, Ms. Tanu. She associated with Mr. Rakesh only when his signatures were required. Mr. Rakesh played cards and then he became fed up of playing the computer games. He resigned after his one-year contract was over.

Then came her turn. She received a notice that she was being made the Director Academics of that Course. It was once her desire but now she knew what to expect as the new Wazeer was given to her, her Associate Director, Ms. Sakuja. She went to the Principal. "Thanks, for the new assignment given to me. But, if you want me to give the quality to the work, the work that should be done in the name of Director Academics, kindly give me the power." He understood what she said. In the evening she received his phone call. He appreciated her first for her research work and the publications. "I don't want you to coordinate the activities related to the Course. I want you to make the name of the institute with your publications and research. You leave the

coordination to Ms. Sakhuja.” That day she realized that history was going to repeat. And she promised herself. “I will change this history”. “I will not fail as others have failed in this game, I will win.”

She was sitting on the throne of powerlessness. She was given a title where sky was the limit but confined to the boundary where she has to work alone in the name of research. “But the Win was the matter of only twenty-four hours the day is made up of”, she thought. It is the matter of those minutes that an hour contains and it is the matter of the effort that one gives to each minute. “I know the game of time”, she said to herself and smiled. For her, the way to win the games in life was to maximize the value of every moment. She worked in isolation. In the coming days, she stopped worrying anymore about why often when Ms. Sakhuja was having a meeting with the Principal, she was stopped at the door by the peon standing over there. Why was all the information given to associate director, and why she never cared about passing that to her? And this time her associate has seldom associated with her, not even for her signatures.

So, she was also given the time.

She worked, researched, published many papers and in all was reflected the name of her College. And her win was that people started talking about the work that she has done, and more of why she was given the time by the principal to make it happen.

She didn't agree with those who talked about the Principal that he was a confused man with a confused head. She knew that he was the person of a great vision. He was a Guru of Management. She knew that these were not his confusions but his deliberate decisions. She knew that he has achieved what he had wanted. He has recently received the best Principal's award. She has recently visited the Principal's own new institute and has witnessed the impact of his vision. They were others who were confused. And this was bound to happen in a dynamic situation.