Ask anyone from B P Indian, and I doubt they ever thought I was any good at dancing. And true, I wasn’t anything compared to the dancing stalwarts of our class – Avni, Rupa, Janani, Vishaka, Aishwarya! And somewhere, it saddened me that I could never be good enough in their books. I wasn’t even asked if I wanted to take part in the *Vande Mataram* they had performed in 8th. Nor was I considered as a dancer by Vishaka when she was planning the farewell dance, even though she kept discussing all about it with me. And after it was decided that *Mahaganapatim* would be performed by 8 dances, they suddenly cut it down to 5 – without even bothering to inform me that I wasn’t going to be there – even though I have been trained in classical dance unlike Janani! I have nothing against all of them – I love them as friends, and truly admire their dancing prowess, but somewhere, I wanted to be as good as them, if not better, to say the least! Sometimes I felt, I should have been given the opportunity to prove myself as a dancer… somewhere I  wanted to prove to them that I too can be good!!

   But that was the time when I just liked dancing – like any other odd person in this world. And then came DID 2. And I do not know what magic it spelled upon me, but I felt a newfound love for dance. Shakti, Kruti and Amar truly inspired me like perhaps no one ever could! After watching those enthralling episodes of *Dance India Dance*, a new energy would surge into my body…I would try to copy their moves, and the likes!

   And then I started working on my flexibility – I guess it really got onto me after watching Shakti stretch like that on stage…Oh, she is just brilliant; her performances are fantastic! I don’t even know how it started out…I remember trying high kicks (God knows where I got that idea from). I tried stretching in my little self-invented ways. And I really wanted to get to do a split! I tried for weeks to get my left and right split…Of course, Mom thought I had gone mad; and yeah, it was pretty crazy. But I remember how jubilant I was when I was finally able to do it one evening! And yes, I think I tried a lot of other things as well – cartwheel, somersault, handstand, headstand!! All those attempts were largely unsuccessful – but thankfully I did not break any bones, even though I showed ample promise :P – and I had to remain content with my mini success of the split.

   10th holidays came and went, and I didn’t make enough effort to find a dance class for myself. My feet also seemed less eager to start tapping, and Mom felt (and for sometime even I did as well) that the dancing *bhoot* was just a phase that had fazed out..

   But that was not to be! 11th came, and I entered Sindhi High School. This wasn’t B P Indian. I had no baggage of being a ok-ok types dancer (and yes, I had improved of course). Here, no one knew me, and I used this to redefine my image as that of a dance lover and a fairly average dancer! Horlicks showed me that Sindhi had some brilliant dancers as in Karthik, Sunil and Nikhil. And if I thought I was flexible, Sushmitha beat me at that – what I had taken some months to achieve, she could do without breaking a sweat! But that didn’t deter me from showcasing my love for dance. True – I was hopeless in the performance at *Horlicks*, and even on farewell perhaps. However during *Tantra*, some people saw the spark of a good classical dancer in me. And then came the annual day in 12th, where I got the opportunity to take the responsibility of a dancing piece. I cannot express how much it meant to me that Monish had shown so much confidence in me; he believed that I could help him turn his vision into a performance on the dance floor. It was a wonderful feeling when people sought my help in choreographing most parts of the song… And when Jithu congratulated me on the brilliant choreography (a part of which I can proudly say was mine), it felt great! When I overheard Sushmitha telling someone that I was the most graceful dancer in the group – it felt good! Whenever people appreciated my dance – it was a longing fulfilled.

   In Sindhi, I felt no inhibition in sharing my passion for dance. People were willing to teach; to encourage the little skill that I have. They accepted me – and gave me the confidence to believe that I wasn’t worthless. They gave me the opportunity to grow. Its ironical in sorts – I still shy away from those at B P Indian when it comes to dance. I never share how much I want to learn and live the art. I will, one day; of course. But that day will be when I will be able to look at myself move in the mirror and feel proud with what I see!

   You know, dance is perhaps the only thing in life that I have actually made an effort for. I do not know if this is just a temporary phase or true passion. But whatever it is, it drives me for now. It gives me immense joy to see myself improve in the mirror everyday; to see the grace grow; to be able to stretch to what would be my limit earlier, now easily; to learn new steps everyday. I can’t wait for the day when I will be able to do the center split as well – I am so close now! I want to be able to do the pirouettes and the shinne-turns and prance around like a ballerina; to split in the air so effortlessly like Shakti; to flow with the music and create magic as ArSha (Amar-Shakti) in Khuda Jaane; to enthrall people like Kruti – who proved that classical dance can be just as mesmerizing, and gave me a new love for classical dance; to groove to hip-hop like Alisha and Sneha (aka Sharon from D3); to do the salsa like Sneha Kapoor; to do cartwheels, headstand, handstand, hollow back – you name it; All things that I have seen on screen, that I have been bowled over by – I wish to try! And master!

   What’s the chart-sheet for now? I think I am making progress by the day. I am picking up some contemporary techniques from videos and dance shows. Hip-hop isn’t really my genre of dance, but I have been trying to learn a step or two in that as well. Versatility always helps, and plus it is a lot of fun! I hope I will be able to find a good dance class atleast in the holidays – and I promise, I shall make the most of it! It is difficult without one as I don’t really know what to try, and a good teacher would be of great help!

   I now nurture a silent dream - to become a contestant on DID! Never in my dreams would I have thought that I would be dreaming about this one day…but now I believe, if I put in effort and fuel my passion, it can become a reality!! I know it is a lot of hard-work, and I will give it my 100% - to give myself the opportunity to experience the true joy of learning so many genres of dance from the best of masters!

   Now, I just pray to Thee – “Give me the power of perseverance to realize my dream…And let me acquire the skill to dance like a dream! Give me the opportunity to revel in the eternal joy of dance! Let a true dancer be born!”