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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI

FACULTY POSITIONS at INDIA'S FIRST GLOBAL LAW SCHOOL



O. P. Jindal Global University*

A Private University Promoting Public Service



Jindal Global Law School*

*(*Proposed to be established in 2009 in Sonapat, Haryana, India)*

O. P. Jindal Global University (JGU) is a non-profit, private University to be established in Sonapat, Haryana, India (near Delhi). The first school planned at JGU is Jindal Global Law School (JGLS), which has the mission of providing global legal education and promoting excellence in legal research. JGLS intends to offer a LL.B. (3 years) programme beginning in September 2009, and B.A. LL.B. (5 years), LL.M. and Ph.D. programmes in later years. JGLS is a member of the International Association of Law Schools based in Washington, D.C., USA, and the American Association of Law Libraries based in Chicago, IL., USA.

JGLS Faculty Appointments Committee of the proposed JGU invites nominations / applications from distinguished law academics and internationally renowned scholars for the following positions:

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Faculty will teach core LL.B. and advanced courses and conduct scholarly research. The applicant must have a Bachelors degree and a Masters or Ph.D. degree in law or other relevant disciplines. Applicants should have outstanding academic record with teaching experience commensurate for the position and an impressive record of research and publications. International experience (qualification, teaching or research fellowship) is desirable.

Director of the Law Library

The Director of the Law Library will plan, manage and develop the law library policies, systems and collection of legal materials. JGLS seeks a results-oriented Director who has demonstrated ability and experience to manage an academic law library or equivalent, and ability to work effectively as part of the senior management. Applicants must be qualified in library science with an LL.M. or equivalent law degree and be able to articulate his or her vision to establish a law library that is comparable to the best in the world.

Salary and Conditions of Service: An internationally-competitive salary and benefits will be provided depending on qualifications, academic standing, experience and position held by the applicant. JGU will provide housing for its academic staff.

Application Process:

Position descriptions are posted on the JGLS website: www.jgls.org
Applications, nominations and enquiries about the vacancies should be addressed to:
Chair, JGLS Faculty Appointments Committee, O.P. Jindal Global University
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New Delhi**

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Professor B. B. Bhattacharya
Vice-Chancellor

VC/I.30/2008
23rd October 2008

MESSAGE

I am very happy to know that the Alumni Affairs and Placement Cell of Jawaharlal Nehru University is holding Alumni Get-Together from 5th to 8th November 2008. Jawaharlal Nehru University, since its inception in 1969, has gradually acquired reputation of being one of the best universities not only in India but also in the world. Over the years, a large number of JNU students have distinguished themselves in academia, civil service, diplomacy, media, literature, social activism, politics, business and arts and culture. By now, JNU's presence is felt in all walks of public life in India. We are very proud of the achievement of our alumni and hope that with their good wishes and help the University will attain a greater height in future.

I welcome the Alumni Get-Together and hope that it turns out to be a memorable event. I also wish that it now becomes a regular feature. I wish success of the get-together and hope that both alumni and current faculty and students will enjoy the Alumni Get-Together, AAJ-08


B.B.BHATTACHARYA

CONTENTS

	Page
1. JNU : Our History	1-2
2. Convocation Address by Balraj Sahini 1972	3-12
3. JNU : Our Campus Story	13-28
4. Alumni Memories	29-112
5. From The Other Side	113-116
6. The Near Future : JNU's Vision	117-119
7. Programme Details	

JNU: OUR HISTORY

The year was 1966. Indian parliamentarians took a decision that changed the landscape of higher education forever in young India. They established a university that would brook no barriers to knowledge. They chose to name it Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) after the first Prime Minister whose image was that of an avid intellectual, and whose creed was national integration, social justice, secularism, the democratic way of life, international understanding and scientific approach to the problems of society, soon to be embedded in the academic life at JNU.

Coming into being in 1969, JNU was at once exciting and different. The institutional structures and the lives of the JNU community were intertwined from early on. There was an imaginative blend of the philosophy of education and its application that resulted in the establishment of somewhat unorthodox academic structures called schools. The schools (of thought basically), beginning with the School of International Studies, School of Social Sciences, School of Languages, and then the School of Life Sciences, are now ten in number covering various subjects from History to Economics, Languages, Cultures, Arts, and International Affairs and Governance, and from Life Sciences to Environmental to Computer and Physical Sciences. There are also three Special Centres now. Manifest in the running of all these programmes was and is the belief that unified scholars, both students and faculty, as seekers of truth and knowledge and the main task of the university was to provide them boundless (boundary less) opportunities by making interdisciplinary approach the framework to study. In practice this meant that one could wade into courses by choosing an optional outside one's own school that may be germane to one's research. It also made exciting the otherwise tame process of selecting one's own future for with a medley of courses available there was extensive interaction and argumentation about the course structures, faculty opinions and the magic word...Grades! The teaching and evaluation process focused on raising the ability of students to learn, absorb and relate coherently the knowledge gained through primary research.

JNU also breathed into life a mysterious, yet tangible force called "ethos". This word meant many things to many people. But to almost all it meant something unique, only to be found at the university, e.g. Students Elections. To most JNUites, the first brush with the JNUSU elections has almost a heady feeling to it. As the university attracts people from all over the country, the elections held during October/November, brings several communities together to exercise their democratic rights. The process of choosing someone to lead gives a unique perspective on democracy itself. To most, such understanding is somewhat abstract, but once inside JNU, there is a perceptible and definitive change that makes itself felt in other academic activities of scholarly life.

Wandering late into the night, without being gender conscious is another plus in the campus. To many, the after dinner brisk walk to the Dhabhas, meeting friends and foes alike, with hardly a few rupees in ones pocket was (and probably still is) the preferred way to make serious and non serious decisions.

JNU has not only an interdisciplinary approach to academics, but also a multilingual and intergenerational one. The undergraduate and the graduate scholars mingle freely in the campus and often one would come across a vibrant discussion with several linguistic tones on the topic of the day. There was and has always been room at JNU for the passionate, tormented and upright souls who would wish to change the world.

At JNU, the teaching process has always been based on the active research of the faculty; in fact, it is probably only at JNU that active researchers simultaneously provide new inputs to teaching that then gets disseminated and discussed amongst the research fraternity. The early years of JNU was a golden period for those who wished to do something different in a staid and circumspect India. Besides the share of inter caste and regional marriages, there was tremendous effort to bring together opinions and actions on international and national issues with political actors of India. In particular, the national emergency declared by Mrs. Indira Gandhi evoked passionate responses from both



faculty and students. There were torchlight processions, angry expostulations and determined actions to confront the government in order to hasten the revocation of emergency. Professors and scholars alike provided the intellectual animation and indeed the ammunition to the battle for restoration of Democracy. International issues were not neglected either in the 1970s either. JNU worried about the fate of Kampuchea and grappled with the question of Korea. India's foreign policy was scrutinized minutely and it became the hub of progressive and liberal views that shaped many future leaders thinking. Unknowingly, the JNU had set standards for public opinion on critical issues facing the country.



Several quiet revolutions in other fields have also taken place at JNU. We have seen a tremendous growth of biological and physical sciences with major contributions from students and faculty in the form of internationally acclaimed publications. Others from the Schools of International, Social Sciences and Languages and Culture have also contributed widely in their own and other journals that pushed the horizons of global knowledge. Detailed information on the activities and growth of the various schools is available from the University, but by eighties, JNU became synonymous with specialized knowledge training and dissemination. Research facilities were arguably some of the finest in India. The Library, the center of interaction amongst scholars, was and is the seat of major resource materials for researchers. On the funny side, it is also the place to meet and exchange views (popularly called gossip!) that has led to the undoing of many theses and term papers. Life at JNU has the library at the helm, classes in the center and Dhabhas to wind up.



The continuing fascination of JNU is well illuminated in the return of former students as faculty in many schools. In a sense, then, the Alumni of the university are also part of the current fabric of JNU, contributing to the ongoing search for understanding the global environment and relating it our cultural and academic traditions. In a complex world, with its new and bewildering set of fresh challenges, the JNU remains a special space devoted to advancing and examining critical theories and fostering contemporary understanding.



Part of the history of JNU is the history of its students' union. Almost mythic lore is the first and only convocation that JNU has had, with the famous actor Balraj Sahni delivering the convocation address. The history of JNU will always be the history of its students, and then only of others. And part of their history is the growing campus itself, its hostels, its dhabas, its open air theatres, as well as its academic spaces and their interactions with each other and their professors. JNU's history is in the memories of its alumni. All this you will get in the following pages.



CONVOCATION ADDRESS OF BALRAJ SAHNI 1972

Balraj Sahni's Convocation Address at Jawaharlal Nehru University

About twenty years ago, the Calcutta Film Journalists' Association decided to honour the late Bimal Roy, the maker of *DO Bigha Zameen* and us, his colleagues. It was a simple but tasteful ceremony. Many good speeches were made, but the listeners were waiting anxiously to hear Bimal Roy. We were all sitting on the floor, and I was next to Bimal Da. I could see that as his turn approached he became increasingly nervous and restless. And when his turn came he got up, folded his hands and said, "Whatever I have to my I say if in my films. I have nothing more to say," and sat down.

There is a lot in what Bimal Da did, and at this moment my greatest temptation is to follow his example. The fact that I am not doing so is due solely to the profound regard I have for the name which this august institution bears; and the regard I have for yet another person, Shri P.C. Joshi, who is associated with your university. I owe to him some of the greatest moments of my life, a debt which I can never repay. That is why when I received an invitation to speak on this occasion, I found it impossible to refuse. If you had invited me to sweep your doorstep I would have felt equally happy and honoured. Perhaps that service would have been more equal to my merit.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not trying to be modest. Whatever I said was from my heart and whatever I shall say further on will also be from my heart, whether you find it agreeable and in accordance with the tradition and spirit of such occasions or otherwise. As you may know, I have been out of touch with the academic world for more than a quarter of a century. I have never addressed a University Convocation before.

It would not be out of place to mention that the severance of my contact with your world has not been voluntary. It has been due to the special conditions of film making in our country. Our little film world either offers the actor too little work, forcing him to eat his heart out in idleness; or gives him too much --so much that he gets cut off from all other currents of life. Not only does he sacrifice the pleasures of normal family life, but he also has to ignore his intellectual and spiritual needs. In the last twenty-five years have worked in more than one hundred and twenty five films. In the same period a contemporary European or American actor would have done thirty or thirty-five. From this you can imagine what a large part of my life lies buried in strips of celluloid. A vast number of books which I should have read I have not been able to read. So many events I should have taken part in have passed me by. Sometimes I feel terribly left behind. And the frustration increases when I ask myself how many of these one hundred and twenty-five films had anything significant in them? How many have any claim to be remembered? Perhaps a few. They could be counted on the fingers of one hand. And even they have either been forgotten already or will be, quite soon.

That is why I said I was not being modest. I was only giving a warning, so that in the event of my disappointing you, you should be able to forgive me. Bimal Roy was right. The artist's domain is his work. So, since I must speak, I must confine myself to my own experience to what I have observed and felt, and wish to communicate. To go outside that would be pompous and foolish.

I'd like to tell you about an incident which took place in my college days and which I have never been able to forget. It has left a permanent impression on my mind.

I was going by bus from Rawalpindi to Kashmir with my family to enjoy the summer vacation. Half-way through we were halted because a big chunk of the road had been swept away by a landslide caused by rain the previous night. We joined the long queues of buses and cars on either side of the landside. Impatiently we waited for the road to clear. It was a difficulty job for the P.W.D. and it took some days before they could cut a passage through. During all this time the passengers and the drivers of vehicles made a difficult situation even more difficult by their impatience and



constant demonstration. Even the villagers nearby got fed up with the high-handed behaviour of the city-walas.

One morning the overseer declared the road open. The green- flag was waved to the drivers. But we saw a strange sight. No driver was willing to be the first to cross. They just stood and stared at each other from either side. No doubt the road was a make-shift one and even dangerous. A mountain on one side, and a deep gorge and the river below. Both were forbidding. The overseer had made a careful inspection and had opened the road with a full sense of responsibility. But nobody was prepared to trust his judgment, although these very people had, till yesterday, I accused him and his department of laziness and incompetence. Half an hour passed by in dumb silence. Nobody moved. Suddenly we saw a small green sports car approaching. An Englishman was driving it; sitting all by himself. He was a bit surprised to see so many parked vehicles and the crowd there. I was rather conspicuous, wearing my smart jacket and trousers. "What's happened?" he asked me.



I told him the whole story. He laughed loudly, blew the horn and went straight ahead, crossing the dangerous portion without the least hesitation. And now the pendulum swung the other way. Every body was so eager to cross that they got into each other's way and created a new-confusion for some time. The noise of hundreds of engines and hundreds of horns was unbearable.



That day I saw with my own eyes the difference in attitudes between a man brought up in a free country and a man brought up in an enslaved one. A free man has the power to think, decide, and act for himself. But the slave loses that power. He always borrows his thinking from others, wavers in his decisions, and more often than not only takes the trodden path.

I learnt a lesson from this incident, which has been valuable to me. I made it a test for my own life. In the course of my life, whenever I have been able to make my own crucial decisions, I have been happy. I have felt the breath 'of freedom on my face. I have called myself a free man. My spirit has soared high and I have enjoyed life because I have felt there is meaning to life.



But, to be frank, such occasions have been too few. More often, than not I had lost courage at the crucial moment, and taken shelter under the wisdom of other people. I had taken the safer path. I made decisions which were expected of me by my family, by the bourgeois class to which I belonged, and the set of values upheld by them. I thought one way but acted in another. For this reason, afterwards I have felt rotten. Some decisions have proved ruinous in terms of human happiness. Whenever I lost courage, my life became a meaningless burden.

I told you about an Englishman. I think that in itself is symptomatic of the sense of inferiority that I felt at that time. I could have given you the

example of Sardar Bhagat Singh who went to the gallows the same year. I could have given you the example of Mahatma Gandhi who always had the courage to decide for himself. I remember how my college professors and the wise respectable people of my home town shook their heads over the folly of Mahatma Gandhi, who thought he could defeat the most powerful empire on earth with his utopian principles of truth and non-violence. I think less than one per cent of the people of my city dreamt that they would see India free in their lifetime. But Mahatma Gandhi had faith in himself, in his country, and his people. Some of you may have seen a painting of Gandhiji done by Nandlal Bose. It is the picture of a man who has the courage to think and act for himself.

During my college days I was not influenced by Bhagat Singh or Mahatma Gandhi. I was doing my M.A. in English literature from the most magnificent educational institution in the Punjab-the Government College in Lahore. Only the very best students were admitted to that college. After independence my fellow students have achieved the highest positions in India and Pakistan, both in the government and society. But, to gain admission to this college we had to give a written undertaking that we would take no interest in any political movement-which at that time meant the freedom movement. This year we are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of our independence. But can we honestly say that we have got rid of our slavish mentality--our inferiority complex?

Can we claim that at the personal, social, or institutional level, our thinking, our decisions, or even our actions are our own and not borrowed? Are we really free in the spiritual sense? Can we dare to think and act for ourselves, or do we merely pretend to do so-merely make a superficial show of independence.

I should like to draw your attention to the film industry to which I belong. I know a great many of our films are such that the very mention of them would raise a laugh among you. In the eyes of educated intelligent people, Hindi films are nothing but a tamasha. Their stories are childish, unreal, and illogical. But their worst fault, you will agree with me, is that their plots, their technique, their songs and dances, betray blind, unimaginative, and unabashed copying of films from the west. There have been Hindi films which have been copied in every detail from some foreign film. No wonder that you young people laugh at us, even though some of you may dream of becoming stars yourselves. It is not easy for me to laugh at Hindi films. I earn my bread from them. They have brought me plenty of fame and wealth. To some extent at least, I owe to Hindi films the high honour which you have given me today.

When I was a student like you, our teachers, both English and Non-English, tried to convince us in diverse ways that the fine arts were a prerogative of white people. Great films, great drama, great acting, great painting, etc., were only possible in Europe and America. The Indian people, their language and culture, were as yet too crude and backward for real artistic expression. We used to feel bitter about this and we resented it outwardly: but inwardly we could not help accepting this judgment.

The picture has changed vastly since then. After independence India has made a tremendous recovery in every branch of the arts. In the field of film making, names like Satyajit Ray and Bimal Roy stand out as international personalities. Many of our artistes, cameramen and technicians compare with the best anywhere in the world. Before independence we hardly made ten or fifteen films worth the name. Today we are the biggest film producing country in the world. Not only are our films immensely popular with the masses in our own country, but also in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, the Eastern Republics of the Soviet Union; Egypt, and other Arab countries in the Far East and many African countries. We have broken the monopoly of Hollywood in this field.

Even from the aspect of social responsibility, our Indian films have not yet degenerated to the low level to which some of the western countries have descended. The film producer in India has not yet exploited sex and crime for the sake of profit to the extent that his American counterpart has been doing for years and years-thus creating a serious social problem for that country. But all these assets are negated by our one overwhelming fault-that we are imitators and copyists. This one fault makes us the laughing stock of intelligent people everywhere. We make films according to



borrowed, outdated formulas. We do not have the courage to strike out on our own, to get to grips with the reality of our own country, to present it convincingly and according to our own genius.

I say this not only in relation to the usual Hindi or Tamil box office films. I make this complaint against our so-called progressive and experimental films also, whether they be in Bengali, Hindi, or Malayalam. I do not lag behind anyone else in admiring the work of Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Sukhdev, Basu Bhattacharjee, or Rajinder Singh Bedi. I know they are highly and deservedly respected;



but even then I cannot help saying that the winds of fashion in Italy, France, Sweden, Poland, or Czechoslovakia have an immediate effect on their work. They do break new ground, but only after someone else has broken it.

In the literary world, in which I have considerable interest, I see the same picture. Our novelists, story writers, and poets are carried away with the greatest of ease by the currents of fashion in Europe, although Europe, with the exception of the Soviet Union perhaps, is not yet even aware of Indian writing. For example, in my own province of the Punjab there is a wave of protest among young poets against the existing social order. Their poetry exhorts the people to rebel against it, to shatter it and build a better world free from corruption, injustice, and exploitation. One cannot but endorse that spirit wholeheartedly, because, without question, the present social order needs changing.



The content of this poetry is most admirable, but the form is not indigenous. It is borrowed from the west. The west has discarded meter and rhyme, so our Punjabi poet must also discard it. He must also use involved and ultra-radical imagery. The result is that the sound and fury remains only on paper, confined to small, mutually admiring literary circles. The people, the workers and the peasants who are being exhorted to revolution, cannot make head or tail of this kind of poetry. It just leaves them cold and per The content of this poetry is most admirable, but the form is not indigenous. It is borrowed from the west. The west has discarded meter and rhyme, so our Punjabi poet must also discard it. He must also use involved and ultra-radical imagery. The result is that the sound and fury remains only on paper, confined to small, mutually admiring literary circles. The people, the workers and the peasants who are being exhorted to revolution, cannot make head or tail of this kind of poetry. It just leaves them cold and perplexed. I don't think I am wrong if I say that other Indian languages too are in the grip of "new wave" poetry.



I know next to nothing about painting. I can't judge a good one from a bad one. But I have noticed that in this sphere also our painters conform to current fashions abroad. Very few have the courage to swim against the tide.

And what about the academic world? I invite you to I look into the mirror. If

you laugh at Hindi films, maybe you are tempted to laugh at yourselves.

This year my own province honoured me by nominating me to the senate of Guru Nanak university. When the invitation to attend the first meeting came, I happened to be in the Punjab, wandering around in some villages near Preet Nagar—the cultural centre founded by our great writer S. Gurbakhsh Singh. During the evening's gossip I told my villager friends that I was to go to Amritsar to attend this meeting and if anyone wanted a lift in my car he was welcome. At this one of the company said, "Here among us you go about dressed in tehmat-kurta, peasant fashion; but tomorrow you will put on your suit and become Sahib Bahadur again." "Why," I said laughingly, "if you want I will go dressed just like this." "You will never dare," another one said. "Our sarpanch Sahib here removes his tehmat and puts on a pyjama whenever he has to go to the city on official work. He has to do it, otherwise, he says, he is not respected. How can you go peasant-fashion to such a big university?" A jawan who had come home on leave for the rice sowing added, "Our sarpanch is a coward. In cities even girls go about wearing lungis these days. Why should he not be respected?"

The gossip went on, and, as if to accept their challenge, I did make my appearance in the Senate meeting in tehmat-kurta. The sensation I created was beyond my expectation. The officer—perhaps, professor—who was handing out the gowns in the vestibule could not recognize me at first. When he did he could not hide his amusement, "Mr Sahni, with the tehmat you should have worn khosas—not shoes," he said, while putting the gown over my shoulders. "I shall be careful next time," I said apologetically and moved on. But a moment later I asked myself, was it not bad manners for the professor to notice or comment on my dress? Why did I not point this out to him? I felt peeved over my slow-wittedness.

After the meeting we went over to meet the students. Their amusement was even greater and more eloquent. Many of them could not help laughing at the fact that I was wearing shoes with a tehmat. That they were wearing chappals with trousers seemed nothing extraordinary to them.

You must wonder why I am wasting your time narrating such trivial incidents. But look at it from the point of view of the Punjabi peasant. We are all full of admiration for his contribution to the green revolution. He is the backbone of our armed forces. How must he feel when his dress or his way of life is treated as a matter of amusement?

It is well-known in the Punjab that as soon as a village lad receives college education he becomes indifferent to the village. He begins to consider himself superior and different, as if belonging to a separate world altogether. His one ambition is to somehow leave the village and run to a city. Is this not a slur on the academic world?

I agree that all places are not alike. I know perfectly well that no complex against the native dress exists in Tamil Nadu or Bengal. Anyone from a peasant to a professor can go about in a dhoti on any occasion. But I submit that the habit of borrowed and idealized thinking is present over there too. It is present everywhere, in some form or degree. Even twenty-five years after independence we are blissfully carrying on with the same system of education which was designed by Macaulay and Co. to breed clerks and mental slaves. Slaves who would be incapable of thinking independently of their British masters; slaves who would admire everything about the masters, even while hating them; slaves who would consider it an honour to be standing by the side, of the masters, to speak the language of the masters, to dress like the masters, to sing and dance like the masters; slaves, who would hate their own people and would be available to preach the gospel of hatred among their own people. Can we then be surprised if the large majority of students in universities are losing faith in this system of education?

Let me go back to trivialities again. Ten years ago, if you asked a fashionable student in Delhi to wear a kurta with trousers he would have laughed at you. Today, by the grace of the hippies and the Hare Rama Hare Krishna cult, not only has the kurta-trousers combination become legitimate, but even the word kurta has changed to guru-shirt. The sitar became a star instrument with us only after the Americans gave a big welcome to Ravi Shankar, just as fifty years



ago Tagore became Gurudev all over India only after he received the Nobel Prize from Sweden.

Can you dare to ask a college student to shave his head, moustache, and beard when the fashion is to put the barbers out of business? But if tomorrow under the influence of Yoga the students of Europe begin to shave their heads and faces, I can assure you that you will begin to see a crop of shaven skulls all over Connaught Circus the next day. Yoga has to get a certificate from Europe before it can influence the home of its birth.

Let me give another example-a less trivial one.'



I work in Hindi films, but it is an open secret that the songs and dialogues of these Hindi films are mostly written in Urdu. Eminent Urdu writers and poets-Krishan Chandar, Rajinder Singh Bedi, K. A. Abbas, Gulshan Nanda Sahir Ludhianwi, Majrooh Sultanpuri, and Kaifi Azmi are associated with this work.

Now, if a film written in Urdu can be called a Hindi film, it is logical to conclude that Hindi and Urdu are one and, the same language. But no, our British masters declared them two separate languages in their time. Therefore, even twenty-five years after independence, our government, our universities, and our intellectuals insist on treating them as two separate and independent languages. Pakistan radio goes on ruining the beauty of this language by thrusting into it as many Persian and Arabic words as possible; and All India Radio knocks it out of all shape by pouring the entire Sanskrit dictionary into it. In this way they carry out the wish of the Master, to separate the inseparable. Can anything be more absurd than that? If the British told us that white was black, would we go on calling white black for ever and ever? My film colleague Johnny Walker remarked the other day, "They should not announce 'Ab Hindi mein samachar suniye' they should say, 'Ab Samachar mein Hindi suniye.'



I have discussed this funny situation with many Hindi and Urdu writers-the so-called progressive as well as non progressive; I have tried to convince them of the urgency to do some fresh thinking on the subject. But so far it has been like striking one's head against a stone wall. We film people call it the "ignorance of the learned." Are we wrong?

Lastly, I would like to tell you about a hunch I have, even at the risk of boring you. A hunch is something you can't help having. It just comes. Ultimately it may prove right or wrong. May be mine is wrong. But there it is. It may even prove right-who knows?



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has admitted in his autobiography that our freedom movement, led by the Indian National Congress, was always dominated by the propertied classes-the capitalists and landlords. It was logical, therefore, that these very classes should hold the reigns of power even after independence. Today it is obvious to everyone that in the last

twenty-five years the rich have been growing 'richer' and the poor have been growing poorer. Pandit Nehru wanted to change this state of affairs, but he couldn't. I don't blame him, because he had to face very heavy odds all along. Today our Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, pledges herself to take the country towards the goal of socialism. How far she will be successful, I can't say. Politics is not my line. For our present purposes it is enough if you agree with me that in today's India the propertied classes dominate the government as well as society.

I think you will also agree that the British used the English language with remarkable success for strengthening their imperial hold on our country.

Now, which language in your opinion would their successors, the present rulers of India, choose to strengthen their own domination? Rashtrabhasha Hindi? By heavens, no. My hunch is that their interests too are served by English and English alone. But since they have to keep up a show of patriotism they make a lot of noise about Rashtrabhasha Hindi so that the mind of the public remains diverted.

Men of property may believe in a thousand different gods, but they worship only one—the God of profit. From the point of view of profit the advantages of retaining English to the capitalist class in this period of rapid industrialization and technological revolution are obvious. But the social advantages are even greater. From that point of view English is a God sent gift to our ruling classes.

Why? For the simple reason that the English language is beyond the reach of the toiling millions of our country. In olden times Sanskrit and Persian were beyond the reach of the toiling masses. That is why the rulers of those times had given them the status of state language. Through Sanskrit and Persian the masses were made to feel ignorant, inferior, uncivilized, and unfit to rule themselves. Sanskrit and Persian helped to enslave their minds, and when the mind is enslaved bondage is eternal.

It suits our present ruling classes to preserve and maintain the social order that they have inherited from the British. They have a privileged position; but they cannot admit it openly. That is why a lot of hoo-haw is made about Hindi as the Rashtrabhasha. They know very well that this Sanskrit-laden, artificial language, deprived of all modern scientific and technical terms, is too weak and insipid to challenge the supremacy of English. It will always remain a show piece, and what is more, a convenient tool to keep the masses fighting among themselves. We film people get a regular flow of fan mail from young people studying in schools and colleges. I get my share of it and these letters reveal quite clearly what a storehouse of torture the English language is to the vast majority of Indian students. How abysmally low the levels of teaching and learning have reached! That is why, I am told preferential treatment is being given to boys and girls who come from public schools i.e. schools to which only the children of privileged classes can go.

It is not necessary for me to comment on the efforts being made to strengthen English in every sphere of life, despite assurances to the contrary. They are all too obvious. It is admitted that English is too alien and hence too difficult to learn for the average Indian. And yet, it helps the capitalists and industrialists to consolidate their position on an all-India scale. That one consideration is more important than any other. According to them whatever serves their interest automatically serves national interest too. They are hopeful that in the not too distant future the people themselves will endorse their stand—that English should retain its present status for ever.





This was my hunch and I confided it one day to a friend of mine who is a labour leader. I told him that if we are serious about doing away with capitalism and bringing in socialism, we have to help the working class to consolidate itself on an all-India scale with the same energy as the capitalist class is doing. We have to help the working class achieve a leading role in society. And that can only be done by breaking the domination of English and replacing it with a people's language.

My friend listened to me carefully and largely agreed with me.

"You have analyzed the situation very well," he said, "but what is the remedy?"

"The remedy is to retain the English script and kick out the English language," I replied.

"But how?"

"A rough and ready type of Hindustani is used by the working masses all over India. They make practical use of it by discarding all academic and grammatical flourishes. In this type of Hindustani, "Larka bhi jata hei" and "Larki bhi jata hei." There is an atmosphere of rare freedom in this patois and even the intellectuals indulge in it when they want to relax. And actually this is in the best tradition of Hindustani. This is how it was born, made progress, and acquired currency all over India. In the old days it was contemptuously called Urdu-or the language of the camps or bazaars.

Today in this bazaari Hindustani the word university becomes univraستی-a much better word than vishwa vidyalaya, lantern becomes laltain, the chassis of a car becomes chesi, spanner becomes pana, i.e. anything and everything is possible. The string with which the soldier cleans his rifle is called "pullthrough" in English. In Roman Hindustani it becomes fultrooa beautiful word. "Barn-door" is the term the Hollywood lights man uses for a particular type of two blade' cover. The Bombay film worker has changed it to bandar, an excellent transformation. This Hindustani has untold and unlimited possibilities. It can absorb the international scientific and technological vocabulary with the greatest of ease. It can take words from every source and enrich itself. One has no need to run only to the Sanskrit dictionary."

"But why the Roman script?" my friend asked.

"Because no one has any prejudice against it," I said. "It is the only script which has already gained all-India currency. In north, south, east and west, you can see shop signs and film poster in this script. We use this script for writing addresses on envelopes and post cards. The army has been using it for the last thirty years at least."

My friend, the labour leader, kept silent for some time. Then he smiled



indulgently and said, "Comrade, Europe also experimented with Esperanto. A great intellectual like Bernard Shaw tried his best to popularize the Basic English. But all these schemes failed miserably, for the simple reason that languages cannot be evolved mechanically; they grow spontaneously."

I was deeply shocked. I said, "Comrade, Esperanto is just that Rashtrabhasha which the Hindi Pandits are manufacturing in their studies, from the pages of some Sanskrit dictionary. I am talking of the language which is growing all round you, through the action of the people."

But I couldn't convince him. I gave more arguments, including the one that Netaji Subhash Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru were both strong advocates of Roman Hindustani, but that too failed to convince him. The question is not whether the comrade or I was right. Perhaps, I was wrong. Perhaps, my thinking was utopian, or "mechanical"-as he called it. As I said before, you can never say whether a hunch is going to be right or wrong. But the fun lies in having it, because to have a hunch is a sign of independent thinking. The comrade should have been able to appreciate that, but he couldn't, because it was difficult for him to get out of the grooves of orthodox thinking.

No country can progress unless it becomes conscious of its being-its mind and body. It has to learn to exercise its own muscles. It has to learn to find out and solve its own problems in its own way. But whichever way I turn I find that even after twenty-five years of independence, we are like a bird which has been let out of its cage after a prolonged imprisonment-unable to know what to do with its freedom. It has wings, but is afraid to fly into the open air. It longs to remain within defined limits, as in the cage.

Individually and collectively, we resemble Walter Mitty. Our inner lives are different from our outer lives. Our thoughts and actions are poles apart. We want to change this state of affairs, but we lack the courage to do anything different from what we have been doing all along-or different from what others expect us to do.

I am sure there must be some police officers in this country who in their hearts want to be regarded as friends rather than enemies of the public. They must be aware that in England the behaviour of the police towards the public is polite and helpful. But the tradition in which they have been trained is not the one which the British set for their own country but the one which they set for their colonies. So, the policeman is helpless. According to this colonial tradition, it is his duty to strike terror into anyone who enters his office, to be as obstructive and unhelpful as possible. This is the tradition which pervades every government office, from the chaparasi to the minister.

One of our young and enterprising producers made an experimental film and approached the Government for tax exemption. The minister concerned was being sworn into office the next day. He invited the producer to attend the ceremony, after which he would meet him and discuss the matter. The producer went, impressed by the informality with which the minister had treated him. As the minister was being sworn in, promising to serve the people truly, faithfully, and honestly, his secretary started explaining to the young producer how much he would have to pay in black money to the minister and how much to the others if he wanted the tax exemption.

The producer got so shocked and angry that he wanted to put this scene in his next film. But his financiers had already suffered a loss with the first one. They told him categorically not to make an ass of himself. In any case, if he had insisted in making an ass of himself the censors would never have passed the film, because it is an unwritten law that no policeman or minister is corrupt in our country.

But there is something which strikes me as being even funnier. Those same people who scream against ministers every





day cannot themselves hold a single function without some minister inaugurating it, or presiding over it, or being the chief guest. Sometimes the minister is the chief guest and a film star is the president, or else the film star is the chief guest and the minister is the president. Some big personality has to be there, because it is the age old colonial tradition.

During the last war, I spent four years in England as a Hindustani announcer at the B.B.C. During those four years of extreme crisis I never even once set my eyes on a member of the British cabinet, including Prime Minister Churchill. But since independence I have seen nothing else but ministers in India, all over the place.



When Gandhiji went to the Round Table Conference in 1930, he remarked to British journalists that the Indian people regarded the guns and bullets of their empire in the same way as their children regarded the crackers and phatakas on Diwali day. He could make that claim because he had driven the fear of the British out of Indian minds. He had taught them to ignore and boycott the British officers instead of kowtowing to them. Similarly, if we want socialism in our country we have firstly to drive out the fear of money, position, and power from the minds of our people. Are we doing anything in that direction? In our society today who is respected most -the man with talent or the man with money? Who is admired most-the man with talent or the man with power? Can we ever hope to usher in socialism under such conditions? Before socialism can come we have to create an atmosphere in which possession of wealth and riches should invite disrespect rather than respect. We have to create an atmosphere in which the highest respect is given to labour whether it be physical or mental; to talent, to skill, to art, and to inventiveness. This requires, new thinking; and the courage to discard old ways of thinking. Are we anywhere near this revolution of the mind?



Perhaps, today we need a messiah to give us the courage to abandon our slavishness and to create values befitting the human beings of a free and independent country so that we may have the courage to link our destinies to the ones being ruled, and not the rulers-to the exploited and not to the exploiters.

A great saint of the Punjab, Guru Arjun Dev, said,
Jan ki tehl sanbhaionhah jan
Uthan bithan jan kaisanga
Jan char raj mukh mathai laagi
Aasa pooran anant taranga



It is my earnest hope and prayer that you, graduates of Jawaharlal Nehru University may succeed where I and so many others of my generation have failed.



JNU: OUR CAMPUS STORY

एइ जे.एन.यू.
(बांग्ला)

नवल—नवलिका देर
निर्बाध लिला प्रांगण
एइ जे.एन.यू.

आसले बलते गेले, बलेइ फेलि
जायगाटि भारी चमत्कार
दारुण भालो
आर जे की बलबो

भावछि आमिओ ना कि दूके पोड़ि
टिवेटियान निले केउ कि
आपत्ति कोरबे ?

डॉक्टर बिमला प्रसाद
डॉक्टर नामवर
डॉक्टर मुजीब

ऐरा रिकमेंड कोरबेनइ
ता हले नतून भावे
उपनयन संस्कार हबे आमार
छात्रावासे कुठरि पेये जाबो
वृत्तिर व्यवस्था तो हबइ हबे
शाब्बाश ! बेटा अर्जुन नागा

भावछि आर भावछि
एतेकि आछे आबार
असले जायगाटि एइ भारी चमत्कार
जे.एन.यू. जे.एन.यू. जे.एन.यू.

यह जे.एन.यू.
(हिन्दी)

नवल—नवेलियों का
उन्मुक्त लीला प्रांगण
यह जे.एन.यू.

असल में कहा जाय तो कह ही डालूँ
बड़ी अच्छी है यह जगह
बहुत ही अच्छी
और क्या कहूँ

सोचता हूँ मैं भी ले लूँ दाखिला
'टिबेटियन' लेने पर क्यों कोई
ऐतराज करेगा

डॉक्टर बिमला प्रसाद
डॉक्टर नामवर
डॉक्टर मुजीब
ये सब तो रिकमेंड करेंगे ही
तब नये सिरे से
उपनयन संस्कार होगा मेरा
छात्रावास में कमरा मिल ही जायेगा
वृत्ति की व्यवस्था तो होगी ही
शाब्बाश ! बेटा अर्जुन नागा

सोचता ही जा रहा हूँ
आखिर क्या रखा है इसमें
दरअसल यह जगह है बड़ी शानदार
जे.एन.यू. जे.एन.यू. जे.एन.यू.

— नागार्जुन

— नागार्जुन

राम सजीवन की प्रेम कथा

जहाँ कई वर्ष पहले गाँव था और जहाँ बैलों के तेल—चुपड़े भोले—काले सींग थे, दोपहर जंगल में पत्तों की गहरी हरी गंध थी और कच्चे आम के ताजा कटे फाँक के साथ नमक—मिर्च का स्वाद था, धान के महकते हरे खेत थे, जहाँ अंधी बुढ़िया महाराजिन थी जिसकी बारी से लड़के खीरा और भुट्टा चुरा लाते थे — राम सजीवन का बचपन वहीं पीछे कहीं छूट गया था। पंद्रह साल पीछे।

उनका बचपन सनेई के उन खेतों में कहीं रह गया था, जहाँ वे स्कूल न जाकर छिप जाते थे और दूसरे लड़कों के साथ 'गदा छाप' बीड़ी के सुट्टे खींचते थे।

ब्राह्मण परिवार था। मँझला किसान वर्ग, एक ऐसा किसान वर्ग, जिसकी गाँव में नाक नीची नहीं रहती, जो गाहे ब गाहे बड़े किसान या जमींदार को भी छोटा—मोटा कर्ज दे सकता है या पेशी कचहरी में हजार—दो हजार खर्च कर सकता है हलवाहों और भूमिहीनों को तो गल्ला—अनाज वह बीज—बिजहरा या खबाई—नातवानी के लिए सवैया—ड्योढ़ा बाढ़ी की दर पर दे ही सकता है।

एक ऐसा किसान—परिवार, जहाँ गाँव के जमींदार के घर आया हुआ पटवारी लौटते हुए एक बार झाँककर चाय—पान ले जाता है, थोड़ी—बहुत हँसी—ठिठोली भी कर जाता है।



राम सजीवन पास के करम्बे के हाई स्कूल और पास के शहर के शासकीय महाविद्यालय को प्रथम श्रेणी से लॉघते हुए अब दिल्ली के उस विश्वविद्यालय तक आ पहुँचे थे, जो देश का माना हुआ ही नहीं, कहा जाता था कि अफ्रीका, दक्षिणी एशिया तो क्या पूरी तीसरी दुनिया का सबसे भव्य विश्वविद्यालय था। इस विश्वविद्यालय में प्रधानमंत्री की बहू, रक्षामंत्री की नातिन, किलोस्करजी की बेटी, बाटाजी का बेटा और देश के सबसे बड़े साहित्यकार का सबसे छोटा साला पढ़ता था।

यहाँ ज्यादातर लड़के-लड़कियों की सभ्यता और मिजाज का अपना ही ढंग था। वे बड़े कोमल, पारदर्शी और खास लगते। हँसते तो इतना उजाला फैलता कि गाँव की हँसी तंबाकू और कत्थे में लिथड़ी किसी वीभत्स रुदन की तरह दिखाई देती।

और लड़कियों का तो कहना ही क्या? उनका अलग ही तापमान और अलग ही रोशनी थी। वे जयादातर जीन्स और खुली बाँहोंवाली होतीं। उन्हें बहुत साफ-सफेद आटे को गूँथकर, उसमें थोड़ा महावर मिलाकर बनाया गया था। खुली बाँहों, बारीक आवाजों, घंटियों जैसी हँसी का ऐसा विराट उत्सव राम सजीवन को अपने जीवन के प्रति एक बार नये सिरे से दार्शनिक हो जाने की प्रेरणा देता था। वे चाहे बस में हों या अपने अकेले कमरे में, साँस भी लेते तो उसके साथ वू डू या इंटिमेट की महक उनके रक्त तक पहुँचती। इस खुशबू में कान्वेंट के पसीने की बहुत अपरिचित लेकिन उत्तेजित गंध घुली होती।

लेकिन राम सजीवन के भीतर एक गहरी चिढ़ और गुस्से ने भी जगह बनाना शुरू कर दिया। इस विराट लकदक शहर में, जहाँ इतनी बड़ी दुकानों, कोठियों, कारों की चमाचम धूप थी, उन्हें अपने गाँव का बड़े से बड़ा किसान भी कुली-कबाड़ी दिखायी देता। अपने टेरिकाट के कपड़े उन्हें सस्ते, मैले और पिछड़े हुए लगते। अपने चेहरे में गाल की हड्डियों का नुकीला उभार, मोटे होंठ, धूप और धूल को झेलकर जिंदा और चौकन्नी बन गयी आँखें, तिल और सरसों के तेल को पीकर मोटे और काले हो गये बाल – सब उन्हें गँवारु लगते। वे काले तो नहीं थे फिर भी उन्हें लगता था कि उनके गेहुँए रंग से गाँव का मटमैलापन कभी छूट नहीं सकता।

दिल्ली एक ऐसा महानगर था, जिसमें रुपयों की नदी कहावत के बाहर बहती थी। दूसरा कोई इतना बड़ा शहर राम सजीवन ने देखा भी नहीं था। एक बार, जब वे बिल्कुल नये थे, एक लड़के से उन्होंने उसके जूते की कीमत पूछी। दो सौ अड़सठ रुपये सुनकर वह जूता उन्हें एक किंवटल गेहुँ के बोरे में बदलता दिखने लगा। फिर तो उनके देखने का यह गोपनीय तरीका ही हो गया। अर्थशास्त्र के माल-मुद्रा-माल वाले नियम के अनुसार वे चीजों को किसी भी अनाज के समान मूल्य की मात्रा में बदल देते। उन्हें बहुत मजा आता। इस आदमी ने कुल मिलाकर तीन किंवटल धान पहन रखा है। इस लड़की ने पचास किलोग्राम अलसी अपनी कलाई में लपेट रही है। मकान का किराया साढ़े तीन किंवटल गेहुँ हर महीने, बिजली-पानी अलग और वो देखो, वो साला हीरो बीस एकड़ की कुल पैदावार पर चढ़ा हुआ, हॉर्न बजाता भगा जा रहा है।

लेकिन यह सब-कुछ एक रोचक मनोरंजक खेल ही नहीं था। यह बहुत गम्भीर और पीड़ादायक था। गाँव का मँझला किसान वर्ग शहर के निचले मँझले वर्ग से भी नीची कोटि का साबित हो रहा था। किसी दफ्तर का छोटा-मोटा बाबू भी जीवन स्तर और सभ्यता के लिहाज से ज़्यादा कुलीन और चमकदार दिखायी देता था।

राम सजीवन के दिमाग में सामाजिक समानता के लिए एक उत्कट आकांक्षा जागने लगी। यह सब कुछ अन्यायपूर्ण है, गलत है। इस देश की सत्तर प्रतिशत जनता को जिंदा रहने के लिए जितने कैलोरी शक्ति की ज़रूरत है, उतना भी



अन्न नहीं मिल पाता, और दूसरा साढ़े तीन किंवटल गेहूँ की शराब एक बैठक में पी जाता है ! राम सजीवन को पुरानी दिल्ली के जामामस्जिद वाले इलाके के फुटपाथों पर, पुलिया के नीचे, अपने गाँव के लोग दिखाई देते – उतने ही गरीब, उतने ही मैले, उतने ही भूखे। 'क्रांति की जरूरत है' – बाबू राम सजीवन ने सोचा।

यह उन्हीं दिनों की बात है जब बंगाल के उत्तरी-पूर्वी इलाके, दक्षिण में आंध्रप्रदेश और बिहार-उत्तर प्रदेश के भोजपुर इलाकों में भूमिहीन और छोटे किसान मिलकर आन्दोलन छेड़ चुके थे। उन्हें मुठभेड़ों में मारा जा रहा था, जेलों में भरा जा रहा था। सरेआम उनकी आँखें फोड़ी जा रही थीं और अखबारों के पन्नों में ऐसी खबरें भरी रहती थीं।

राम सजीवन को लगा कि उनके मन में बचपन से ही गरीबों और असहायों के लिए गहरी करुणा रही है। उन्हें कई घटनाएँ ऐसी याद आयीं जब वे अपने घर से मक्का और चावल चुराकर कोलों के घर में दे आते थे, जहाँ कई दिनों से चूल्हा नहीं जला होता था। अपने पुराने कपड़े तो वे गाँव के लड़कों को दे ही देते थे।

मेधा और प्रतिभा राम सजीवन में तेज थी। उन्होंने समाज को जानने-समझने के लिए तरह-तरह की किताबें पढ़नी शुरू कीं 'पूँजी' पढ़ डाली, 'एंटी ड्यूहरिंग', 'एंटीथ ब्रूमेर आफ लुई बोनापार्ट', 'होली फेमिली' से लेकर लेनिन और माओ के विचारों का अध्ययन किया। और धीरे-धीरे समाज एक एक खूब साफ नक्शा उनके दिमाग में बनने लगा।

लेकिन गाँव छोड़े दस साल हो रहे थे। फेलोशिप मिलती थी, इसलिए वहाँ जाने की जरूरत कभी हुई नहीं और धीरे-धीरे गाँव के लोगों के मटैले और ठोस चेहरे उनके दिमाग में धुँधले और अमूर्त होने लगे। खेत गायब हुए, चीजों को गल्ले में बदलकर देखने का पुराना किसानी ढर्रा बिसर गया। हलवाहों के पसीने की जानी-पहचानी गंध, बकरियों की बू के साथ पता नहीं कहाँ उड़ गयी। अब उनके दिमाग में समाज की वर्गीय बनावट तो साफ थी, लेकिन लोगों के चेहरे गायब हो चुके थे।

विश्वविद्यालय का हॉस्टल था, जिसमें सजीवन रहते थे। जीन्स पहनते थे, उसके ऊपर कुर्ता और दाढ़ी। चश्मा लगाने लगे थे। संगठन में सक्रिय थे और संगठन के कार्यकर्ता उन्हें बहुत बड़ा चिंतक और लेखक मानते थे। राम सजीवन तीसरी दुनिया के सबसे आधुनिक विश्वविद्यालय में रहते हुए अवध के किसान आन्दोलन पर डी.लिट. कर रहे थे।

राम सजीवन का कमरा भी देखने लायक था। उसमें कभी झाड़ू नहीं लगती थी। गर्द और मकड़ी के जालों के बीच कुछ किताबें और अखबार बिखरे रहते। रजाई पुरानी थी और जब वे सोते तो उसकी रूई इनकी दाढ़ी और बालों में उलझ जाती। वे बारह बजे सोकर उठते, कमरे में ही ज्यादातर रहते और समाज के बारे में लेख आदि लिखा करते। फ़ेलोशिप इस बीच मियाद पूरी हो जाने के कारण बन्द हो गयी थी इसलिए आर्थिक अड़ंगा पैदा हो रहा था। जितनी ही आर्थिक दिक्कत आती, राम सजीवन खुद को जनता के और निकट पाते। उनके लेखों में असमानता के खिलाफ आग और तेज हो उठती। उन्होंने हॉस्टल के कमरे में रहते हुए जनता से जुड़ने, अनुभवों और विश्वदृष्टि के स्तर पर सर्वहारा वर्ग में स्वयं को विलीन करने के लिए वर्गच्युत (डीक्लास) होने की जरूरत के बारे में लिखा।

लेकिन वे परिश्रम नहीं करते थे, परिश्रम करनेवालों के बारे में लिखते जरूर थे। महीनों तक कपड़े नहीं धोते थे। नहाने नहीं थे। दाढ़ी में तो खैर सर्वहारा का अधिनायकवाद लागू हो ही चुका था। अपने कमरे की साफ-सफाई पर उनका ध्यान नहीं जाता था। उन्हें देखकर यह जरूर लगता कि वे वर्गच्युत हो चुके हैं।

और तभी तीसरी दुनिया के उस सबसे बड़े विश्वविद्यालय के अधिकारियों ने छात्रों की माँग को ध्यान में रखते हुए, दूसरे विश्वविद्यालयों के सामने एक आदर्श उदाहरण प्रस्तुत किया। 'सहशिक्षा' के साथ-साथ 'सहवास' या 'सहआवास' का उदाहरण।

जिस छात्रावास में राम सजीवन रहते थे उस छात्रावास का आधा उत्तरी हिस्सा छात्राओं के रहने के लिए कर दिया गया। छात्रावास अंग्रेजी के 'एच' के आकार का बना था। दक्षिण तरफ की डंडी में लड़कों की तिमजिली इमारत थी जिसकी हर मंजिल पर सौ कमरे थे, उत्तर वाली डंडी के कमरों में लड़कियाँ रहती थीं और दोनों को जोड़ने वाले बीच के डंडे में मेस था, जहाँ लड़के-लड़कियाँ ब्रेकफास्ट, लंच और डिनर लेते थे। इस तरह बैलगाड़ियों और अस्सी प्रतिशत भुखड़ों के देश में वह विश्वविद्यालय ससेक्स की किसी शिक्षा संस्था की तरह सहशिक्षा, सहवास और सहभोज के हवाई मार्ग पर उड़ पड़ा।

विश्वविद्यालय के ज्यादातर लड़के-लड़कियाँ 'हेलो हाय संप्रदाय' से आते थे, यानी ऐसे उच्च वर्गों से, जहाँ कान्वेंट की पृष्ठभूमि के अलावा नाच-गाना और हँसना-रोना भी उसी तरह का होता है। राम सजीवन ने बड़ी मेहनत, साधना और लगन से अंग्रेजी का ज्ञान अर्जित किया था, लेकिन वे समझते तो खूब थे, बोलने में उनका खास-बिहारी लहजा आड़े आ जाता था। 'ए भेरी गुड ईभनिंग' जैसे वाक्य तो वे बचा ले जाते, लेकिन बचपन से 'वी' की जगह 'भी' की रटाई उनकी जिहवा के संस्कारों के अन्तरतम तक पैठ चुकी थी। उन्हें कभी-कभी लगता कि संस्कार कुछ विशिष्ट संदर्भों में चेतना से ज्यादा शरीर को पकड़ते हैं। उनकी चेतना स्लाइस की होती लेकिन जीभ कढ़ी की माँग करती।

एच की दक्षिणी डंडी की सबसे ऊपरी मंजिल के कमरा नम्बर तीन सौ आठ की बालकनी में राम सजीवन खड़े थे। एच की उत्तरी डंडी की सबसे ऊपरी मंजिल के कमरा नम्बर तीन सौ सोलह की बालकनी में वह लड़की निकल आयी थी, जो उधर



रहती थी। दोनों बालकनियाँ आमने-सामने थीं। राम सजीवन ने आखिर उधर देखा। वह लड़की उन्हीं की ओर देख रही थी। आँखें बड़े ऐंद्रिक ढंग से लगभग एक-दूसरे का शरीर सहलाते हुए मिलीं और इस इंद्रिय बोध से निकलती ऊष्मा से राम सजीवन को सात्विक कंप हो गया। ललाट और नासिकाग्र पर स्वेद कण झिलमिला उठे। यह रीतिकालीन काव्य शास्त्रीय शृंगार लक्षण थे। अब मूर्च्छा की बारी थी, जिससे राम सजीवन बचे। उन्होंने अपने आपको उदासीन, गम्भीर और कुछ-कुछ लापरवाह जैसा बनाया। लड़की थोड़ी देर तक बालकनी में रहने के बाद अन्दर चली गयी। इस बीच राम सजीवन अपनी बालकनी से हटे तो नहीं, लेकिन उन्होंने फिर उस लड़की की दिशा में देखा नहीं। हाँ, उसकी मौजूदगी को वे कभी अपनी पीठ पर और कभी अपनी कनपटी पर महसूस करते रहे। वह लड़की उन्हें एक उजली हरी परछाई की तरह लग रही थी, जो अचानक बहुत आत्मीय, घरेलू और घनिष्ठ हो उठी थी।



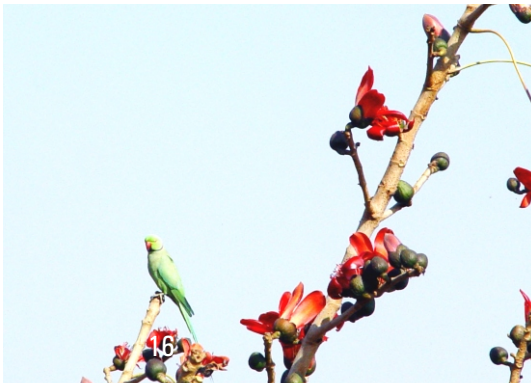
दोपहर मेस में खाना खाते समय उन्होंने चारों ओर सतर्क और उत्सुक आँखें दौड़ायीं, लेकिन कहीं कुछ नहीं। बहुत-सी लड़कियाँ खा रही थीं लेकिन, मामला जादुई बन गया था। एक नज़र में सारी लड़कियाँ उन्हें बालकनी की लड़की लगने लगतीं और दूसरे ही पल हर लड़की कोई और साबित हो जाती। खाना खाते हुए वे यह खेल विभोर होकर खेलते रहे।

राम सजीवन कमरे में ही थे, जब उनके मन में एक संगीतपूर्ण मीठे संदेह ने आँखें खोलीं। वह लड़की अपनी बालकनी पर थी और निश्चित ही राम सजीवन की बालकनी की ओर देख रही थी। वे अपने कमरे में अँधेरा करके खिड़की से उसे समूची रागात्मकता के साथ देख रहे थे। रंग खूब गोरा। आटे और महावरवाला भी नहीं, मक्खन और गुलाबवाला। बहुत हलका सफेद बनियान जैसा 'आप'। खुली बाँहें। नीचे तक खुला हुआ गला और जाँघों पर फेड हुई जीन्स की विदेशी नीली पैंट। उम्र बीस के इधर या उधर उन्हें लगा जैसे अजंता की किसी यक्षिणी को आधुनिक कपड़े पहना दिये गये हों। इस लड़की के गले में आवाज कैसी होगी – और हिंदी कितनी बदलकर वूडू में डूब कर निकलेगी।



वे बालकनी में निकले। लड़की गजब हिम्मत और बेफिक्री से उनकी ओर ताक रही थीं। संस्कारों का फर्क है। मुहल्ले-गाँव की होती तो आँख न उठाती या नीचे वाला पार्क देखने लगती। अचानक आँखें मिलीं। आह ! यह एक लड़की की आँख थीं बहुत कुछ समझा दिया उस दृष्टि ने। कितने-कितने अर्थ उसमें थे। यह परिचय था – पहला। बाबू राम सजीवन को बचपन में देखी गयी रामलीला का जनकवाटिका प्रसंग याद हो आया, फिर जयशंकर प्रसाद, मैथिलीशरण गुप्त से होते हुए वे शमशेर तक पहुँचे :

'हाँ तुम मुझसे प्यार करो
जैसे हवाएँ मेरे सीने से करती हैं,
जिनको वह गहराई तक दबा नहीं पातीं।
जैसे मछलियाँ लहरों से करती हैं ...,
तुम मुझसे प्यार करो
जैसे मैं तुमसे करता हूँ।
आईनो रोशनाई में घुल जाओ
और आसमान में मुझे लिखो और मुझे पढ़ो।
आईनो मुस्कराओ और मुझे मार डालो
आईनो मैं तुम्हारी जिंदगी हूँ'
लड़की जा चुकी थी और अब वे नेरूदा में खोये हुए थे – 'टुडे आई
केन राइट सेडेस्ट लाइन्स ... ।'



सुबह उन्होंने होस्टल के उत्तरी गेट के चौकीदार कुमाऊँनी धीरज सिंह नेगी से पूछा कि क्या वह कमरा नंबर तीन सौ सोलह में रहने वाली लड़की के बारे में जानता है, तो उसने कहा : “उसको कौन नहीं जानता। वो तो लंदन से आयी हुई ठहरी यहाँ। पिता केन्या में बहुत बड़ी फैक्ट्री चलानेवाले हुए, कहा। यहाँ आने के पहले बेबी लंदन में सात साल पढ़ के आनेवाली हुई, बड़ा मीठा स्वभाव पाया उसने कहा। सी.पी.एस. में रिसर्च करने वाली हुई।”

यह तो ‘कसप’ नाम के उपन्यास से निकला आदमी मालूम होता है, राम सजीवन ने सोचा। “नाम क्या है उसका ?” उन्होंने डरते-डरते पूछा।

“पंडित जी, तुम्हारा इरादा तो नेक ही दीखे मुझे। नाम उसका हुआ अनिता चाँदीवाला। गुजरात की हुई, पर गुजराती न जाननेवाली ठहरी। हिंदी बोलने में भी जगह-जगह रुकनेवाली हुई।”

फिर चौकीदार धीरज ने उनकी ओर देखा, बीड़ी का गहरा सुट्टा खींचकर धुआँ निकालते हुए हँसने लगा। खाँसी और हँसी के बीच उसने बायीं आँख दबाई और कहा – “माल लेकिन असली फटाका हुआ ठहरा।”

लुंपेन है यह। राम सजीवन ने सोचा। कामगार वर्गों के ऐसे लोगों में वर्ग चेतना पैदा करने के लिए अभी बहुत गहरी शिक्षा की जरूरत है। भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टियाँ यही काम नहीं कर रही हैं इसीलिए तो मजदूरों, किसानों और छोटे कर्मचारियों के बीच उनका जनाधार नहीं है। अब इस चतुर्थ श्रेणी के कर्मचारी चौकीदार को ही देखो – उसका यह घोर स्त्रीविरोधी रूख सामंती और पूँजीवादी समाज की पतित मूल्य व्यवस्था की देन है।

राम सजीवन गुस्से में वहाँ से चले गये। इस पेचीदा मुद्दे पर सोचते हुए कि ऐसे लोगों को उनके आर्थिक-सामाजिक वर्गों के आधार पर परिभाषित किया जाये, या उनकी मूल्य चेतना, संस्कार, विचार और व्यवहार के आधार पर।

अनीता चाँदीवाला। इस पूरे नाम में एक संगीत है। अनीता – अन्नी-अन्नु, अनु-इसके कई रूप हो सकते हैं। ‘चाँदीवाला’ सरनेम इस स्वप्न जैसे नाम को लौकिकता और भौतिकता प्रदान करता है। अब राम सजीवन के दिन का ज्यादातर समय सामने की बालकनी को देखने और इस नाम को अकेले में बोलकर उसे अपने भीतर तक महसूस करने में गुजरता। वे कमरे में, रजाई ओढ़कर, लेटे-लेटे धीरे से बोलते, जैसे सामने बैठे किसी को संबोधित कर रहे हों – ‘अन्नी, तो उलिसिस कैसी लगी?’ फिर वे मौन होकर जेम्स जोयस के बारे में उसका जवाब सुनते। जवाब हिंदी में भी होता और मुश्किल से बनायी गयी अंग्रेजी में भी।

एक दिन उन्होंने कमरे में, रजाई के भीतर ही उससे ‘हीट एंड डस्ट’ और ‘ज्वेल इन द क्राउन’ फिल्मों के बारे में पूछा। अनीता चाँदीवाला ने अंग्रेजों के ‘ब्रिटिश राज नास्टेल्लिया’, के बारे में विस्तार से बताया। उसने बताया कि किस तरह इंग्लैंड के लोग अपने साम्राज्यवादी अतीत से बेतहाशा प्यार करते हैं, अँगूठे के बराबर सिकुड़ जाने के बावजूद अपने देश को ‘ग्रेट’ ब्रिटेन बोलते हैं और भारत के इतिहास को कैसे अपने मन-माफिक बदलते तोड़ते हैं। फिर उसने कहा – ‘फार एकजांपल, दि लेटेस्ट फिल्म, इन प्रासेस आफ प्रोडक्शन – ‘ट्रांसफर ऑफ पावर’ पुट्स, दैट दि वेरी कांसेप्ट आफ डोमिनिकन स्टेट्स फार इंडियन रिपब्लिक वाज नाट डिमांडेड बाय नेशनलिस्ट्स – नेहरूज, पटेल्स, एटसेटरा ... एटसेटरा, बट इट वाज अ सेजसचन बाय दि लास्ट वायसराय माउंटबैटन ...’

इस लड़की के विचारों में जागरूकता भी है और अपने इतिहास को देखने का एक सही दृष्टिकोण भी। बस अगर उसे समाज के मौजूदा हालात के बारे में वैज्ञानिक तरीके से समझा दिया जाय और जनता से जोड़ दिया जाय तो वह संगठन में बहुत महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा सकती है। राम सजीवन अपने पलंग पर रजाई छोड़कर बैठ गए और कहा – ‘अब्साल्यूटली करेक्ट .. . भ्वाट दे हैव इन, यू सी, दे हैव टर्नड अवर नेताजी सुभाष बोस, इन टु ए फन्नी पोलिटिकल जोकर ...’

ह्वाट को ‘भ्वाट’ बोल जाने पर उन्हें गहरी ग्लानि हुई। उन्होंने पक्का इरादा किया कि अपनी अंग्रेजी पर टाट-पट्टी स्कूल की परछाई तक नहीं पड़ने देंगे आइंदा।

अनीता चाँदीवाला अब भी अपनी बालकनी में निकलती। कभी-कभी नहाकर अपने बाल सुखाने वह वहीं खुली हवा में खड़ी हो जाती। खुली बाँहें। बेफिक्री में उठी हुई भुजाएँ, शैंपू किये हुए सूखते और अलग-अलग उड़ते बाल ... राम सजीवन अपने कमरे में अँधेरा करके चुपचाप देखते और उनकी अत्यंत आत्मीय फुसफुस वार्ता शुरू हो जाती।

एक दिन, बड़ी हिम्मत और लंबी प्रतीक्षा के बाद, अन्तिम निर्णय लेकर उन्होंने कहा – ‘अनु, आई लव यू’ पूरा कमरा देर तक इस वाक्य के संगीत में बजता रहा। मार्डेनिया और इंटीमेट की खुशबू कमरे में तैरती रही। बचपन की बड़ी सघन और तेज किलकारी ने राम सजीवन के हृदय में जन्म लिया और वह गले से निकलती-निकलती रुकी और उसने उनके पूरे शरीर को किसी कमजोर पेड़ की तरह झकझोर दिया। वे काँप रहे थे। शरीर का तापक्रम बढ़ गया था और इस छोटे से वाक्य को बोलने में ही उन्हें अपने शरीर की बहुत सारी ऊर्जा, साँस और लहू दाँव पर लगाना पड़ा था। लेकिन एक बार इसे बोल जाने के बाद वे काफी मुक्त और हलका महसूस कर रहे थे। वे बेतहाशा खुश थे और हेमंत कुमार का गीत गाने लगे।

खुशी उन्हें दुहरी थी। इसलिए कि उन्होंने इस निर्णायक चिर प्रतीक्षित वाक्य में ‘लभ’ को ‘लव’ बोल डाला था। अनायास



बिना किसी कोशिश के और यह एक कमाल था। देहाती, निम्न मध्यवर्गीय, पिछड़ी, हीन भावना को उन्होंने एक जोरदार पटखनी दे दी थी और वह कमरे के फर्श पर चारों खाने चित पड़ी कराह रही थी।

एक बार राम सजीवन ने यह अनुभव किया कि वह लड़की देर से अपनी बालकनी में खड़ी है और वह उनकी प्रतीक्षा में है। वह वहाँ से हट ही नहीं रही थीं उदास थी और शाम की ढलती धूप को देख रही थी। राम सजीवन कमरे से निकलकर अपनी बालकनी में आ गये। वह लड़की वहीं खड़ी रही जैसे उसने पूरी आत्मीयता और मौन कृतज्ञता के साथ उनकी उपस्थिति को स्वीकार कर लिया हो। अपनी बालकनी के लोहे की गुनगुनी रेलिंग पर उन्होंने कुहनियाँ टेकीं और झुक कर टिक गये। लड़की फिर भी वहीं रही। संबंध प्रगाढ़ होता चला गया। हवा में एक बहुत समझदार आत्मीयता और स्वीकृति थी। कहने की कोई और जरूरत नहीं रह गयी थी। यह वही क्षण था जहाँ भाषा व्यर्थ होती है। 'मौन मधु हो जाए ...' यह वाक्य उनके दिमाग में तैरा। फिर सच्चिदानंद हीरानंद वात्स्यायन अज्ञेय की पंक्ति उभरने लगी – 'मौन ही भाषा है।'

राम सजीवन ने खुद को कोसा कि कैसे-कैसे प्रतिक्रियावादी कवियों की रचनाएँ उनके दिमाग में आ रही हैं। लेकिन बड़ी कोशिशों के बाद भी बाबा नागार्जुन और आलोकधन्वा की कोई कविता याद नहीं आ रही थी। उन्हें क्रांतिकारी प्रेम कविताओं के लिए या तो विदेशी क्रांतिकारी कवियों या देशी प्रतिक्रियावादी कवियों का मोहताज होना पड़ रहा था। उन्होंने याद किया कि 'स्त्रीपिंग प्रिंसेस' के बारे में लेनिन का कहना क्या था। प्रेम और स्वप्न को लेनिन ने भी क्रांतिकारियों के लिए जरूरी माना था और इसी वक्त राम सजीवन ने निर्णय लिया कि वे क्रांतिकारी प्रेम कविताएँ लिखेंगे। हिन्दी में इसकी कमी पूरी होनी ही चाहिए। आखिर नेरूदा, नाजिम, लोर्का, मायकोव्स्की वगैरह भी तो क्रांतिकारी थे, जिन्होंने इतनी अच्छी प्रेम कविताएँ लिखीं। हमारी हिन्दी में यह काम धर्मवीर भारतियों, नवगीतकारों और नीरजों आदि के खाते में डाल दिया गया है। बंगला के जीवनानंद दास जैसे कवि तो दुर्लभ ही हैं हिन्दी में।

सिर्फ संगठन ही नहीं, संगठन के बाहर के परिचित लड़के भी जान चुके थे कि राम सजीवन को आजकल प्रेम हो गया है। उन्होंने स्वयं यह बात सबको बताया थी। वे बहुत सरल, सीधे और भावुक थे। जो उनके खास मित्र थे, उनके पास, वे अक्सर रात में पहुँच जाते और इस प्रेम की विभिन्न विकास अवस्थाओं के बारे में बतलाते। उन्होंने अपने मित्र, नवीन ढौंढियाल को बतलाया था कि "वह लड़की चाहती है कि मैं कुछ बोलूँ। उससे कुछ कहूँ। कल शाम हम लोग आधे घंटे तक आमने-सामने की बालकनी में चुपचाप खड़े रहे। तुम लोग इसे समझ नहीं सकते, यह एक अनोखे किस्म का प्रेम है। देखो, अभी तक हमने एक वाक्य नहीं बोला है, एक-दूसरे से बात नहीं की है, लेकिन हम लोग उस 'स्टेज तक पहुँच चुके हैं, जहाँ तक अमूमन साधारण और चालू संवेदनशीलता के लोग महीनों साथ-साथ रहकर, घूम-फिरकर पहुँचते हैं। वह वहाँ खड़ी रहती है चुपचाप, मैं यहाँ खड़ा रहता हूँ खामोश। हम दोनों एक-दूसरे की मौजूदगी को 'फील' करते हैं।"

एक शाम उन्होंने अपने दूसरे दोस्त शिरीश मिश्र को बतलाया – "आजकल मैं विशेष परिवर्तन महसूस करता हूँ। लगता है अनीता इस संवादहीनता से ऊब रही है। फिर उसकी उम्र भी तो मेरे मुकाबले कम-से-कम पाँच-छह साल कम है। इतनी परिपक्वता कहाँ से आ सकती है इतनी जल्दी? बहुत दिन हो भी गये हैं इस तरह। एक तरह की 'मॉनोटोनी' एक तरह का दोहराव और एकरसता पैदा हो गयी है, हमारे संबंधों के बीच। आखिर है तो वह लड़की ही। इस 'सेकेंड सेक्स' का पूरा मनोविज्ञान बिल्कुल अलग होता है। पहल तो वह सिर्फ बंबइया फिल्मों में ही करती है। इसीलिए इन कामर्शियल फिल्मों को मैं यथार्थ विरोधी मानता हूँ। उन्होंने दर्शकों के दिमाग में सिर्फ अवास्तविक यथार्थ की इमेज ही

नहीं बिठायी है, बल्कि उन्होंने इतने बड़े संचार माध्यम की मार्फत एक अवास्तविक स्त्री की धारणा को भी खूब फैलाया है। नतीजा देखो, हर शहर और कस्बे का मध्यवर्गीय छोकरा खूब कंधी-बंधी करके, सजधज के किसी हीरो को डुप्लीकेट करता है और सोचता है कि उसे देखकर कोई भी लड़की उस पर मर-मिटेगी और गाना गाने लगेगी।”

राम सजीवन ने नवीन ढाँढ़ियाल से कहा – “अब सारा मामला बड़े ‘क्रिटिकल जंकचर’ तक पहुँच गया है। मैंने ‘मार्क’ किया है कि मैस में खाना खाते वक्त कभी-कभी वह मेरी ओर जानबूझकर देखती है। आज दोपहर लंच में उसने अपना चम्मच जोरों से फर्श पर गिरा दिया था, जिससे मैं उसकी ओर देखने लगीं। दरअसल उस वक्त मैं कहीं और देख रहा था।”

एक बार वे रात दस बजे पहुँचे और उन्होंने किसी गहरे रहस्य को प्याज की तरह पर्त दर पर्त खोल के कहा – “तुमने अनीता की एक चीज पिछले पाँच-छह दिनों में नोट की है? वह आजकल इतना ज्यादा ‘स्लीवलेस’ पहनती है कि सिर्फ बाँहें ही नहीं बगलों के नीचे का काफी हिस्सा खुला हुआ रहता है। और आज उसने जो ‘टाप’ हरे रंग का पहन रखा था, उसका गला इतना खुला हुआ था – इतना खुला हुआ था, कि समझ लो मॉड लड़कियाँ भी ऐसा दुस्साहस नहीं कर सकतीं तुम इसे अनीता की बेशर्मी कहोगे? लेकिन बंधु प्यारे, ऐसा है नहीं। यह उसका एक संकेत है। यह उसकी बेचैनी और खीझ की अभिव्यक्ति है। इतना उत्तेजक कपड़ा पहनकर अपने शरीर को इतना खोलकर वह मुझसे कहना चाहती है कि मैं अपनी मौजूदा निर्णयहीनता को तोड़ूँ। मैं उससे साफ-साफ बात करूँ। आखिर लड़की अपने शरीर के माध्यम से ही तो मौन को भाषा में बदलती है।”

कल्याण कुमार दास ने कहा – “यार, तुम लड़की से सीधे बात क्यों नहीं कर लेते? जाकर उससे कह दो कि मैं आपसे कुछ जरूरी बात करना चाहता हूँ। तुम खामखाह बैठे-बैठे मकड़जाल बुनते रहते हो।” राम सजीवन आहत हुए। यही बात अनीता ने कितने अनोखे तरीके से, अपने सुन्दर युवा शरीर से मौन को भाषा में बदलते हुए, कितने गोपन ढंग से कही थी, और वही बात कल्याण कुमार दास कितने भौंड़े और फूहड़ तरीके से कह रहा है। आखिर इस पूँजीवादी समाज व्यवस्था ने जिस उपभोक्तावादी मानव-समूह को पैदा किया है वह हर चीज को एक ‘जिंस’ एक ‘कमोडिटी’ ही तो समझता है। जैसे लड़की बिकने के लिए तैयार बैठी हो और मैं एक्सचेंज की बाजारू भाषा बोलकर उसका मोल-भाव कर डालूँ और उसे पटा लूँ।

लेकिन ऊपर से राम सजीवन चुप ही रहे। उन्होंने चलते हुए कहा – “हाँ, बस एक सही समय के इंतजार में हूँ यार! वैसे बाय द वे, हमारे इस प्रेम को तुम समझते हो, वह वैसा है नहीं। गुरु, यह एक अलग और अजब तरह का खेल है। इसका मर्म पहले घनानन्द भी जानते थे – ‘अति सूधी सनेह को मारग है ...’ यहाँ कोई कपट नहीं कोई छिपाव नहीं, हम दोनों एक दूसरे के लिए बिल्कुल निशंक परदर्शी हैं। एक-दूसरे से हमारा कुछ भी छिपा नहीं, रही बात आमने-सामने बैठकर, या खड़े होकर, या लेटकर, या चलते-चलते बात करने की, तो वह कोई ऐसी बड़ी तोप चीज नहीं बंधु प्यारे, वेट करो। देखते चलो। वो भी हो जायेगा। जो-जो तुम सोचते हो, सब हो जायेगा।”

बीच में लड़की दस दिनों के लिए कहीं बाहर चली गयी थी। उसके कमरे की पिछली खिड़की खुली रह गयी थी। राम सजीवन चुपचाप अपने कमरे में लेटे-लेटे या बालकनी में खड़े होकर उस ओर देखते रहते। लड़की की यह अनुपस्थिति और उसकी पिछली खिड़की का खुला रह जाना भी उन्हें कई-कई अर्थों से भरा हुआ लगा। आखिर अपने प्रेम के लिए जैसा ‘फोर्म’ उन्होंने चुन रखा था, उसमें भाषा के अलावा बाकी सारी चीजें भाषा थीं, संकेत थीं, उनमें कई-कई अर्थ थे।

उन्होंने शाम को अनीता की खिड़की खुली रह जाने के बाबत शिरीश मिश्र को बतलाया तो उसने कहा – “राम सजीवन जी, हमको तो ई लगने लगा है कि अब आप पगला पायेंगे। आप कुछ करेंगे-धरेंगे नहीं, कोठरी में दिन-रात घुसे इहे सब सोचेंगे। रउआ हमका बताई, भला ऊ लड़की आपको जानती-बूझती भी है? जाके पूछे ली ओसे कि का आपको हमार नामो मालूम है कि नहीं, जाई।”

राम सजीवन फिर आहत हुए, मर्मांतक चोट लगी। इतनी सीधी और निष्कवच बातें उन्हें ‘वल्गर’ लगती थीं। उन्हें इस आध्यात्मिक सत्य पर पिछले दिनों अच्छी तरह यकीन हो गया था कि प्रेम कभी भी इतना सघन और तीव्र हो ही नहीं सकता, जब तक वह दोनों तरफ बराबर न हो। उन्हें पूरा भरोसा था कि जिस तरह उन्होंने चौकीदार धीरज सिंह नेगी से अनीता के बारे में पूछा था वैसे ही अनीता ने जरूर उससे उनके बारे में पूछा होगा। यह विश्वास इतना दृढ़ और इतना सत्य लगता था कि उसे किसी भी तरह से ‘वेरिफाई’ करने की जरूरत ही नहीं थी। फिर उन्हें ऐसा करते हुए एक अजीब-सा डर भी लगता था। कहीं ऐसा न हुआ तो?

पूँजीवाद मानवीय कलाओं का सबसे बड़ा और निर्मम शत्रु होता है। उन्होंने चालू दुनियादार ढर्रे का प्रेम न करके एक सुन्दर रचना को गढ़ने की कोशिश की थी। यहाँ प्रेम का रिश्ता नहीं, एक कला था, एक उत्कृष्ट मानवीय कलाकृति, लेकिन पूँजीवादी व्यवस्था का ही यह दुर्दांत प्रकोप था कि अपने निकट से निकट के दोस्तों से भी वे संवाद नहीं बना पा रहे थे। ‘एलियनेशन’ संबंधों के बीच अपरिचय के विंध्याचल खड़ा कर रहा था। उन्हें चेखव की ‘ग्रीफ’ कहानी याद आयी, जिसमें अपने भीतर की पीड़ा को कहने के लिए नायक को कोई नहीं मिलता और आखिर में अपने घोड़े के गले से लिपटकर वह रोता है।



राम सजीवन को कोई घोड़ा तो नहीं मिला, लेकिन उन्होंने रात में एक कविता लिखी – 'खुली खिड़की का अर्थ' जिसकी शुरु की पंक्तियाँ थीं :

'... शिरीश मिश्र

तुम नहीं जानते कि

इतिहास में खुली रह गयी एक अकेली

खिड़की का क्या अर्थ होता है

लेकिन मैं जानता हूँ

खुली खिड़की का एक भविष्य होता है

जिसमें से प्रतिज्ञाओं और संकल्पों की रोशनी फूटती है।

वगैरह—वगैरह ...'

एक दिन दोपहर राम सजीवन दौड़ते-दौड़ते कल्याण कुमार दास के कमरे में पहुँचे। नवीन ढौंढियाल भी वहाँ बैठा हुआ था।

राम सजीवन के चेहरे से खुशी के मजबूत और गदराये पेड़ की हरी फुनगियाँ बाहर निकलकर हिल रही थीं। फेफड़ों में ढेर सारे गुडहल और कनेर के फूल भरे हुए लग रहे थे। लगता था जैसे वे खुशी के किसी गैस के गुब्बारे के साथ बाँध दिये गये हों और उनके पैर जमीन पर पड़ते हुए जैसे कोई भार न डालते हों, बस हलके से धरती को छूते भर हों, ऊपर-ऊपर से।

राम सजीवन ने एक ही साँस में कहा, "आज गजब हो गया। अब सब कुछ बदल चुका है। यह एक ऐसा मोड़ है, जहाँ सारी चीजें नये सिरे से शुरु होती हैं।"

"हुआ क्या? क्या बातचीत हो गयी?" ढौंढियाल ने पूछा।

"बातचीत को तुम लोग इतना महत्त्व क्यों देते हो? यह समझ लो कि मेरी अब तक की रीडिंग बिल्कुल सही निकली। आज मैं बस स्टाफ पर खड़ा था। उसने पूछा – 'एक्सक्यूज मी प्लीज। एवेदर बस नम्बर ट्रिपल सिक्स इज गान?' मैंने कहा – 'इट इज येट टु कम' वह मुस्कुराई, थैंक यू कहा और फिर स्टाफ पर ही खड़ी हो गयी।"

कल्याण कुमार दास ने राम सजीवन को पूरी सहानुभूति से देखा और पूछा – "तो महोदय, इसमें आपका चिंतन कौन-सा संकेत ढूँढता है?"

राम सजीवन फिर मर्माहत हुए। उनका चेहरा तमतमा आया। "वैसे तो ये सारी बातें ही तुम लोगों के लिए फिजूल हैं, लेकिन अगर तुम सब अपने ही तर्कों के जरिये सारी बातों को समझना चाहते हो तो यह बताओ कि उस वक्त बस स्टाफ में कम-से-कम बीस और लड़के खड़े थे। अनीता ने यह सवाल मुझसे सिर्फ मुझसे ही क्यों पूछा?"

इस प्रश्न का उत्तर न कल्याण कुमार दास के पास था और न ही नवीन ढौंढियाल के पास।

एक दिन शाम छह बजे के लगभग राम सजीवन ने देखा कि अनीता ने अपनी बालकनी से एक कागज का टुकड़ा नीचे गिराया, उनकी ओर देखा, जरा-सी ठहरी और फिर अन्दर चली गयी।

सब समझ गये राम सजीवन। वे सीढ़ियाँ उतरकर नीचे पहुँचे। हवा चल रही थी। और वहाँ हरी घास पर ढेरों कागज के टुकड़े थे। यहाँ वहाँ हर तरफ। धीरे-धीरे काँपते-हिलते। कुछ एकदम चुप और स्थिर जैसे मिट्टी में अपनी जड़ें फेंक चुके हों।

कौन-सा है वह कागज? कैसे उसे पहचानें? क्या लिखा होगा उसमें? रात आठ



बजे तक लोगों ने देखा, बाबू राम सजीवन अपने कुर्ते की ओली बनाकर वहाँ के सारे कागजों को बीन रहे हैं। वे चलने को तैयार होते तभी कहीं कोई और छोटी-सी चिंदी, घास के नीचे हिलती दिखाई पड़ जातीं वे उत्तेजना में काँपते हुए उसे उठाते।

उस रात दो बज गये। उन्होंने अपने कमरे की बत्ती जलाये रखकर सारे टुकड़ों को खोल-खोलकर, अच्छी तरह से उलट-पलटकर देखा। एक बार सबको देख चुकने के बाद उनके मन में शंका जागी और उन्होंने दुबारा उन्हें देखा। बीच में सोने की कोशिश की लेकिन फिर एक तेज उत्तेजना, गहरी उत्सुकता और साँस रोक देने वाली व्याकुलता ने उनकी नींद उड़ा दी और वे लगातार कई-कई बार उन्हें एक-एक कर देखते रहे। उनके कमरे के फर्श पर, पलंग पर चारों ओर कागज की नन्हीं-नन्हीं तमाम रंगों की चिंदियाँ बिखरी हुई थीं और राम सजीवन उनके बीच बैठे थे।

राम सजीवन ने पूछा – ‘अनु, तुम्हें पता है, गाँवों में लोग किस तरह से रहते हैं? बंजर जमीन और सूखे आसमान से लड़ते-जूड़ते उन लोगों की हड्डियाँ कैसे निकल आती हैं? सामंती दमन और महाजनी शोषण का एक कभी न खत्म होने वाला सिलसिला कैसे उनके जीवन को कीड़े-मकोड़ों से बदतर बना डालता है ...’

अनीता की आँखें भीग गयी थीं। राम सजीवन ने रजाई से अपना सिर ढाँप लिया और फूट-फूट कर रोते रहे। लगभग तीन घंटे।

राम सजीवन की आँखें फटी-फटी और लाल रहतीं। लगता कि उनका लहू गालिब के मुताबिक सिर्फ रंगों में दौड़ने-फिरने का ही कायल नहीं रह गया है, बल्कि आँखों में आकर ठहर गया है। मुँह खुला रहता तो खुला ही रह जाता। दाढ़ी, किसी अफ्रीकी जंगल की तरह बेतरतीब और अराजक हो चुकी थी। पतलून के पांयचों में मिट्टी और धूल लगी होती।

जब कोई उनसे कुछ कहता तो कुछ समझने में उन्हें काफी वक्त लगता और अक्सर वे कुछ और समझ जाते। फिर वे बड़ी आत्मीयता, बेफिक्री और निष्कलता से उसे अपने प्रेम के बारे में बताने लगते।

उस दिन बालकनी में अनीता के साथ एक बूढ़ी महिला खड़ी थी। कत्थई बार्डर की सफेद साड़ी पहने। बिलकुल बगुले के पर जैसे बाल। पतली सुनहरी कमानी का चश्मा वे दोनों बालकनी की ओर देख रही थीं।

राम सजीवन ने हफ्तों बाद अपना चेहरा धोया। पानी की टंडक से उनका मन खिल उठा। उन्होंने दूसरा कुर्ता पहना। बालकनी में निकले और आकाश की ओर देखकर मुस्कराये फिर उन्होंने नेरुदा या और किसी भी कवि की कोई कविता याद करनी चाही लेकिन पता नहीं क्यों बार-बार उनके दिमाग में बंकिम चंद्र की यही पंक्तियाँ घूमने लगती थीं –

‘शस्य श्यामलाम्, सुजलाम् सुफलाम् मातरम् बंदे मातरम् !’

राम सजीवन ने इन्हीं दिनों एक लेख लिखा – ‘समाज की वर्तमान आर्थिक-राजनैतिक स्थिति और वर्गीय अंतर्विरोधों की विकास अवस्था।’

यह लेख उनके संगठन में, रात में विशेष रूप से बुलायी गयी बैठक में पढ़ा गया। राम सजीवन की वस्तुपरक दृष्टि और सामाजिक परिस्थितियों की वैज्ञानिक समझ की प्रशंसा की गयी। उस दिन राम सजीवन विश्वविद्यालय के कैफेटेरिया में देर तक बैठे रहे। सामने कुछ मेजों को छोड़कर अनीता बैठी थी। वह अपनी नोटबुक में कुछ लिख रही थी।

राम सजीवन अच्छी तरह जानते थे कि वह नोटबुक में कुछ लिख नहीं रही है। लिखने का सिर्फ अभिनय कर रही है और अगर वह वहाँ बैठी है तो सिर्फ इसलिए कि वे वहाँ बैठे हैं।

इन दिनों सबसे बड़ा संकट था कि कोई उनसे उनके प्रेम के बारे में कुछ सुनना नहीं चाहता था और उनके पास इसके अलावा कोई दूसरा विषय नहीं था।

संबंधों का लोप हो चुका था।

एक कारण यह भी था कि राम सजीवन अपने प्रेम के बारे में जो कुछ बतलाते, उसकी भाषा इतनी अलग होती थी कि उसे समझना और किसी के लिए संभव न था। उनके निकट के दोस्त भी उनसे कतराते। नवीन ढौंढियाल ने एक दिन बतलाया कि रात में करीब दो बजे राम सजीवन उसके कमरे में आये। उनकी आँखें चौड़ी और लाल थीं। कुर्ता फटा था और मैला था। लगभग आधे घंटे तक फ्रेंच जैसी किसी भाषा में बोलते रहे। बीच-बीच में हकलाते थे, मुँह से लार बहने लगती थी। फिर वे देर तक हँसते रहे।

नवीन ढौंढियाल, असलम अख्तर, शिरीश मिश्र, कल्याण कुमार दास सभी लोग मिलकर राम सजीवन के कमरे में पहुँचे। निर्णय लिया गया था कि राम सजीवन ने अपने चारों ओर जो संसार रच लिया है उसे तोड़कर, उसे नष्ट करके ही उन्हें बचाया जा सकता है। शिरीश ने कहा, उन्हें ‘इंटेंस स्क्रिजो फ्रेनिया’ है। उनके भ्रम को असलियत से टकराकर उसे तोड़ना पड़ेगा।



“हम कोई दया नहीं करेंगे। बीवेयर ऑफ पिटी”, असलम ने नारा दिया।

राम सजीवन अपने कमरे में ही थे। रजाई में घुसे हुए। शिरीश मिश्र ने बात शुरू की – “देखिए सजीवन बाबू, सच्चाई तो ई है कि ऊ लड़की अभी आपका नामो नहीं जानती और न ही उसे पता है कि आप ऊ से प्यार कर रहे हैं, मंजनु की नाई।”

“और यह भी सच है कि आप बिना कुछ किये, सोचते ही सोचते पागल हुए जा रहे हैं। चलिए हमारे साथ, हम आपको अनीता चाँदीवाला से मिलवा देते।”

“लेकिन सजीवन बाबू, ई बात आप अच्छी तरह से जान लें कि जउन वर्ग की ऊ लड़की है ऊ वर्ग में रउआ की हालत चपड़ासीऊ से गयी गुजरी है रउआ का पता है कि नहीं कि ऊ लड़की का बाप केनिया में फ़ैक्टरी चला रहा है और अनीता चाँदीवाला केंब्रिज में पढ़के इहाँ आयी है।”

“आप हाथ मुँह धोइए। अच्छे कपड़े लते पहनिये, दाढ़ी-दूढ़ी बनाइए और कायदे से रहिये, जब ऐसी लड़की से प्यार किया है तो जरा उसके माफिक बनिये।”

“और नहीं बन सकते तो फौरन अपनी दुनिया में लौट आइए। आँखें खोलिए, धूप को देखिए। वह लड़की किसी और संसार की है। आप किसी और दुनिया के वासी हैं गुरुदेव ! जो आप वर्ग-वर्ग करते हैं वह खयाली पुलाव नहीं, एक ठोस सच्चाई है। इसे जानिये। वर्गीय अंतर्विरोध में सिर्फ संघर्ष ही नहीं होता, कविताएँ ही नहीं लिखी जातीं, जलूस और नारे ही नहीं लगते। प्यार-व्यार जैसी कई चीजें भी उसके हाथों मारी जाती हैं।”

“राम सजीवन होश में आइये।”

“आप होश में नहीं आयेंगे तो पागल हो जायेंगे।”

वे सब बारी-बारी से बोलते रहे। यह सब कुछ पहले से तैयार कर लिया गया था। यह एक क्रूर-निर्मम नाटक था।

राम सजीवन निस्पंद पड़े रहे। फिर उन्होंने जोर-जोर से गाना शुरू किया। उनकी आँख से आँसू बह रहे थे।

लोगों ने बाद में जाना कि यह गीता का दूसरा अध्याय था। आश्चर्य यह था कि वह बाबू राम सजीवन को याद था – पूरा का पूरा।

एक दिन हॉस्टल के वार्डन ने नवीन ढौंढियाल और कल्याण कुमार दास को अपने आफिस में बुलाया। वार्डन सदगोपाल ने उनके सामने एक अंतर्देशीय पत्र रखा, “इसे पढ़िये आप लोग और बताइये कि क्या किया जाये?”

वह प्रेम पत्र था जिसे बाबू राम सजीवन ने अनीता चाँदीवाला को लिखा था और उसे कमरा नम्बर 316 के पते पर पोस्ट कर दिया था। पत्र दो भाषाओं में था, अंग्रेजी में भी और हिंदी में भी। उसमें जीवनानंद दास, लोकार्क, नेरुदा और टैगोर की पंक्तियाँ थीं। अपने हृदय के गहरे प्रेम का मर्मांतक और विदारक वर्णन था। कल्याण कुमार दास को वह पत्र किसी उत्कृष्ट क्लैसिक का एक अंश लगा।

वार्डन सदगोपाल ने कहा – “वह लड़की बहुत डर गई है। उसने सिक्योरिटी प्रोटेक्शन की माँग की है। आज सुबह ही उसे पत्र मिला। पहले तो उसे पता ही नहीं लगा कि किसने लिखा है, फिर उसने चौकीदार धीरज सिंह नेगी से पूछा। राम सजीवन ने अपना नाम-पता साफ लिख रखा है।”

“उस लड़की ने क्या कहा है?” ढौंढियाल ने पूछा।

“वह बहुत डर गयी है।” वार्डन ने बतलाया – “कह रही थी कि पिछले दिनों से उसे ऐसा जरूर लगने लगा था कि एक पागल-सा आदमी लगातार उसे घूरता रहता है, लेकिन उसने पहले इसे गंभीरता से नहीं लिया था। अब बात दूसरी है।



आप लोग कुछ कीजिये। वैसे मैंने उसे फिलहाल समझा दिया है। लेकिन अच्छा होगा आप लोग राम सजीवन को कुछ दिनों के लिए उनके गाँव भेज दें। यहाँ से बाहर रहेंगे, हवा बदल जायेगी तो शायद वे ठीक हो जायें।”

रात की गाड़ी से राम सजीवन को जबरन उनके गाँव भेज दिया गया। सभी लोग उनके साथ स्टेशन गये। असलम अख्तर को तो साथ-साथ गाँव तक भेजा गया। वह तीसरे दिन उन्हें पहुँचाकर लौटा। बाबू राम सजीवन का कमरा उस हॉस्टल से बदलकर एक ऐसे हॉस्टल में किया गया, जिसमें सिर्फ लड़के रहते थे। उनकी गैर मौजूदगी में उनका सारा सामान पहले वाले कमरे से निकालकर नये वाले कमरे में किया गया।

कुछ दिनों बाद वार्डन ने फिर कल्याण कुमार दास और नवीन ढौंढियाल को बुलाया और उनके सामने अंतर्देशीय पत्रों का एक पुलिंदा रख दिया। सभी पत्र राम सजीवन ने गाँव से अनीता चाँदीवाला को भेजे थे। अनीता चाँदीवाला ने उन पत्रों को खोला भी नहीं था और चौकीदार धीरज नेगी के हाथों वार्डन के पास भेज दिया था।

वे पत्र मेज पर रखे थे। हवा में धीरे-धीरे काँपते; बिल्कुल बंद, उन्हें किसी ने भी नहीं पढ़ा था। कल्याण कुमार दास ने उन्हें उठाकर अपने झोले में डाल लिया, जिसके भीतर गहरा अँधेरा था।

राम सजीवन अब फिर लौट आये हैं, एक साल तक गाँव में रहने के बाद। अनीता चाँदीवाला रिसर्च खत्म करके केनिया जा चुकी हैं। कल्याण कुमार दास एक अखबार में उपसंपादक हो गया है। नवीन ढौंढियाल को गोहाटी के किसी चायबागान में अच्छी नौकरी मिल गयी है।

राम सजीवन को पूरा यकीन है कि अनीता चाँदीवाला अभी भी यहीं विश्वविद्यालय में है। वह उन्हें देख रही है। वे किसी अदृश्य इन्तहान में से गुजर रहे हैं।

राम सजीवन अभी भी समाज की वस्तुगत परिस्थितियों, दर्शन की भौतिकवादी परम्पराओं, वर्गीय अंतर्विरोधों पर कभी-कभी लेख आदि लिखते रहते हैं।

— उदय प्रकाश

ये क्या जगह है दोस्तों

नवल-नवेलियों का

उन्मुक्त लीला-प्रांगण

यह जेएनयू

असल में कहा जाए तो कह ही डालूँ

बड़ी अच्छी है यह जगह

बहुत ही अच्छी

और क्या कहूँ।

बाबा नागार्जुन ने यह बात बजरिए कविता सन 1978 में कही थी। ‘यह जेएनयू’ शीर्षक से लिखी इस कविता में आगे वे इस विश्वविद्यालय में दाखिला लेने की अपनी इच्छा जाहिर करते हैं। नागार्जुन की यह तमन्ना असल में देश के उन युवाओं की हसरत व्यक्त करती हैं जो मानसून के आते ही हर साल इस विश्वविद्यालय के दरवाजे पर दस्तक देने आ जाते हैं।

वैसा ही मंजर आजकल जेएनयू में। अपने जीवन का सबसे पुरउम्मीद दौर गुजारने के लिए छात्र-छात्राएं परिसर को गुलजार करने में लगे हैं। एक खुली दुनिया में कदम रखने का अहसास उनके साथ है। इस सत्र में नामांकन शुरू हो चुका है। अकादमिक स्थलों, विभिन्न स्कूलों, कैंटीन की दीवारों पर चिपके पोस्टरों, इबारतों में नए रंग की खुशबू महसूस की जा सकती है। पुराने छात्र, कामरेड नए छात्र-छात्राओं की नामांकन प्रक्रिया में बढ़-चढ़कर सहयोग दे रहे हैं। हाँ। जेएनयू में रैगिंग के लिए कोई जगह नहीं। आप बतौर मेहमान यहाँ स्वीकार किए जाते हैं। जेएनयू का यह खास रिवाज पीढ़ी-दर-पीढ़ी कायम है। शायद यहीं से इस संस्थान की विशिष्टता शुरू हो जाती है।

अरावली की पहाड़ियों पर पुराने बरगद, नीम और पीपल के पेड़ों के बीच बोगनबेलिया, अमलतास और गुलमोहर से सजे जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय में अगर आप पहली बार पधारें हैं तो इस बात से शायद ही इंकार करें कि यहाँ की फिजा दिल्ली में हो कर भी ‘दिल्ली में नहीं’ का अहसास कराती है। असल में जेएनयू की एक अलग ही तहजीब है जो इसे अन्य विश्वविद्यालयों से अलग बनाती है। लगता है, यह पंडित नेहरू खाब की वह ताबीर है जिससे जुड़ने का सपना देश के हर



कोने का युवा करता है।

भले ही यह संस्थान एक खास खयाल का पोषक कहलाए और इस पर मास्को-बीजिंग की घुट्टी पिलाने का तोहमत लगे, मगर एक जनतांत्रिक माहौल सभी को प्रभावित करता है। पूरी तरह आवासीय इस विश्वविद्यालय में छात्र-छात्राओं और शिक्षकों के रिश्ते भी एक खुलेपन को दर्शाते हैं। इनके आवास को एक-दूसरे के करीब बनाया गया है ताकि एक स्वस्थ, सामुदायिक नाता विकसित हो। यहां का जनतांत्रिक माहौल बनाने में वाद-विवाद और बहस-मुबाहिसों का बड़ा योगदान है। प्रश्न करने की प्रवृत्ति और वाद-विवाद की संस्कृति यहाँ महज कक्षा तक ही सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि देर तक होने वाली पब्लिक मीटिंगों और ढाबा तक फैली हुई है। छोटे शहरों-गाँवों से आने वाले युवाओं के लिए विश्वविद्यालय के शुरुआती दिन तरह-तरह के अनुभव वाले होते हैं। किसी को अंग्रेजीदां, बिंदास लड़कियों की माया भरमाती है तो किसी को यहाँ का इंकलाबी माहौल। कहते हैं यह वह जगह है जहाँ हर साल कई रामसजीवन बनते हैं। आज यहाँ जिस 'अफलातूनी मोहब्बत' की बात होने लगी है उनका विकास यों ही चंद दिनों में नहीं हो गया। कई पुराने बताते हैं : हम तो हंसी तो फंसी के फलफसे वाले समाज से आए थे। बड़ा वक्त जाया होने के बाद जाना कि वह हंसी तो और ही कुछ कहती थी। अक्सर ही यह हंसी दोस्ती का आमंत्रण थी। लेकिन आज वक्त बदल चुका है। दूर से आने वाले युवा भी इतनी उम्मीद का भार लेकर नहीं आते कि भरभरा कर गिरने की नौबत आ जाए।



बात मजाक में कही गई है, लेकिन सच है कि जेएनयू बंगाल, त्रिपुरा और केरल के बाद भारत का एक ऐसा विश्वविद्यालय है जहाँ पर मार्क्सवादी व्यवस्था और विचार हावी रहे हैं। शुरुआती दिनों से लेकर अब तक कैंपस के औसत छात्र-छात्राओं और अध्यापकों का रुझान वामपंथी विचारधारा की तरफ दिखता है। यहाँ की दाखिला नीति ही ऐसी है कि जिसमें गरीब, पिछड़े इलाकों से आने वाले छात्रों का प्रवेश आसान हो सके। इसके लिए उन्हें अतिरिक्त 'डेप्रिवेशन पाइंट्स' दिए जाते हैं। हालांकि 1984 में इस नीति को रद्द कर दिया गया। दस साल बाद 1994 में छात्रों के आंदोलन के बाद यह दाखिला नीति फिर लागू की गई। 2003-2004 के अकादमिक सत्र में 1318 छात्रों का नामांकन हुआ जिसमें से 594 छात्र निम्न तथा मध्य आय वर्ग से थे। 724 छात्र उच्च आय वर्ग से थे। साथ ही 354 छात्र ऐसे थे जिनकी शिक्षा पब्लिक स्कूलों में हुई थी जबकि 964 छात्र ऐसे थे जिनकी शिक्षा म्यूनिसिपल एवं गैर-पब्लिक स्कूलों में हुई थी।



जेएनयू में भले ही खास विचारधारा का फरहरा लहराता रहा, पर बदलाव की हवा यहाँ भी पुरअसर रही। दो दशक पहले यहाँ हिन्दी एक सहमी हुई भाषा थी। आज वह एक ताकत है। कैंपस में व्यवहार की भाषा के रूप में हिन्दी की स्वीकार्यता अंग्रेजी से कम नहीं है। हिन्दी भाषियों के दबदबे के अलावा टीवी चैनलों ने हिन्दुस्तानी को यहाँ की सहज भाषा बना दिया है। एक पुराने कामरेड हंसकर कहते हैं कि हमारे वक्त में प्रेम करने के लिए अंग्रेजी के शब्दकोश चाटे जाते थे। अब लगता है हिन्दी में भी प्यार किया जा सकता है। यह बात भले ही हल्केपन में कही गई है, पर अमिताभ बच्चन से लेकर टीवी के नामी प्रस्तोताओं, फिल्मी सितारों की हिन्दी ने अपनी भाषा के हक में माहौल तो बना ही दिया है। जेएनयू में हिन्दी को लेकर हीनभावना के दिन लद गए लगते हैं।



पहरावे के जिक्र के बिना यहाँ की बात अधूरी ही रहेगी। जिस जींस-कुर्ते और झोले की शोहरत पूरे देश के रोशनख्यात परिसर में रही, उसका जनक जेएनयू ही है। कभी यहाँ पैंट-कोट पहन कर चलने वाला असहज हो जाता था, क्योंकि जेएनयू की फक्कड़ी का श्रृंगार जींस-कुर्ते से ही संभव था। अब बाजारवादी रुझान ने माहौल बदला है। पहरावे चाल-चलन में रंगीनी यहाँ भी आई है। लंबी कारें, मोबाइल एक नया समाज साफ दिखाने लगे हैं। ठाठ का मजाक उड़ाने वाले भी गाड़ियों के मॉडल और माइलेज पर मुबाहिसा करते दिख जाएंगे।

उदारीकरण की जीत का एक नमूना यहाँ भी देखा जा सकता है। हालांकि अभिनव कारमेड सफाई में कहते हैं कि उपभोक्तावादी दौर में हम डिब्बाबंद नहीं रह सकते।

बहरहाल जेएनयू के छात्र-छात्राओं की वर्ग चेतना किसी भी संस्थान को पाठ पढ़ा सकती है। ये चेतना उन्हें जाति, धर्म, आय-भेद से ऊपर बौद्धिक स्तर पर एक-दूसरे से जुड़ने को प्रेरित करती हैं। समाजशास्त्र में एम.ए. कर रहे राजस्थान के बाबूलाल भील बताते हैं; मेरे मन में अपनी आर्थिक-सामाजिक पृष्ठभूमि का ख्याल हर वक्त रहता है, पर सहपाठी मित्रों और शिक्षकों ने किसी भी तरह की हीनमन्यता को मेरे अंदर नहीं करने दिया।

निजी आजादी की भी बड़ी नजीर आपको यहीं मिलेगी। इसका उदाहरण लैंगिक जागरूकता को लेकर बनाया गया फोरम 'अंजुमन' है। इसके सदस्य मारियो कहते हैं : मुंबई के जिस कॉलेज से मैंने स्नातक किया था वहाँ ऐसी किसी संस्था के बारे में सोचा भी नहीं जा सकता। यहाँ हर किसी को अपना स्पेस मिला है। मैं अगर समलैंगिक हूँ, इससे दूसरों को क्या परेशानी है?"

लेकिन ऐसा नहीं है कि यह स्पेस मुँहमांगे मिल गया हो। इसके लिए छात्रों ने काफी संघर्ष किया है। कैंपस के अंदर यौन-उत्पीड़न को रोकने के लिए बना संगठन जीएसकैश जिसका उदाहरण है। इसका गठन आठ मार्च 1999 को किया गया।

विश्वविद्यालय सही मायनों में अखिल भारतीय स्वरूप का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है। केरल से लेकर कश्मीर तक और उत्तर पूर्व राज्यों से लेकर मध्य भारत के कोने-कोने से यहाँ छात्र शुरुआती दिनों से आते रहे हैं। यह आवासीय परिसर छात्र-छात्राओं को एक-दूसरे को नजदीक से जानने का अवसर देता है। जो कुछ भी भ्रांतियाँ या पूर्वग्रह अन्य जाति या धर्म के प्रति रहते हैं, धीरे-धीरे खत्म होने लगते हैं। अरबी भाषा और साहित्य में शोधरत अताउर रहमान कहते हैं : 'मदरसा से पढ़ने के बाद जामिया मिलिया इस्लामिया में जब मैंने दाखिला लिया, वहाँ अपनों के बीच ही सिमटा रहा। यहाँ आकर पहली बार दुनिया को दूसरों की नजर से देखा।'

इसके बावजूद विदेशी छात्रों को अपनी ओर आकर्षित करने में विश्वविद्यालय अभी तक सफल नहीं हो पाया है। एक सत्र में बमुश्किल 50-60 विदेशी छात्र नामांकन लेते हैं। दो साल पहले समाजशास्त्र विभाग ने ग्लोबल स्टडीज प्रोग्राम शुरू किया था जिससे विदेशी छात्रों का आना बढ़ा है। कहना होगा कि विदेशी छात्रों को कैंपस की आबो-हवा में ढलते देर नहीं लगती है। हिन्दी में एम.ए. कर रहे अमेरिका के विलियम टायलर ने पिछले साल 'आईसा' की ओर से भारतीय भाषा साहित्य एवं संस्कृति अध्ययन संस्थान में 'कांसिलर' के पद के लिए चुनाव लड़कर सबको चौंका दिया था। अंतरराष्ट्रीय अध्ययन संस्थान में एम.ए. कर रहे वियतनाम के फांग सिर्फ हिंदी गाने सुनते हैं बल्कि टूटी-फूटी हिंदी बोलने भी लगे हैं।

जेएनयू में पढ़ाना किसके लिए फख की बात नहीं है। कुछेक अपवादों को छोड़ कर शिक्षकों की नई पीढ़ी ने देश-विदेश के अकादमिक क्षेत्र में अपनी दक्षता साबित की है।

कैंपस के छात्र भले ही इंकार करें, पर कई अध्यापक इस बात को स्वीकारते हैं कि 70 के दशक के मुकाबले वर्तमान में शोध का स्तर इस संस्थान में भी गिरा है। प्रो. रोमिला थापर कहती हैं पहले छात्र-छात्राओं में शोध को लेकर जो उत्साह था वह कम हुआ है। इस उदासीनता के लिए प्रो. आनंद कुमार सामाजिक व्यवस्था को ज्यादा जिम्मेदार मानते हैं। वे कहते हैं कि आज इसकी कोई गारंटी नहीं कि यदि आपने एक अच्छी थीसिस लिख दी तो सम्मानजनक नौकरी किसी कॉलेज या विश्वविद्यालय में पा ही जाएंगे।

सत्र के दशक में जेएनयू छात्र संघ के अध्यक्ष रह चुके देवीप्रसाद त्रिपाठी बताते हैं कि उनके समय में आईएएस जैसी परीक्षा की तैयारी दोगे दजे का काम माना जाता था। छात्र इसे स्वीकार करने में शरमाते थे। जेएनयू के छात्र रह चुके वर्तमान में प्रोबेशनरी (प्रशिक्षु) आईएएस प्रणव ज्योतिनाथ कहते हैं, 'जेएनयू के शिक्षित, जागरूक छात्र अगर आईएएस ज्वायन करते हैं तो निस्संदेह नौकरशाही के लिए अच्छी बात है। योजना बनाने, उनके क्रियान्वयन में छात्रों का अनुभव लाभदायक ही होगा।'

उदारीकरण के बाद उच्च शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में राज्य की घटती भूमिका तथा बेरुखी छात्र-छात्राओं के बीच निराशा का वातावरण तैयार कर रही है। भारतीय भाषा केंद्र में इसी महीने अपनी थीसिस जमा कर रहे फैजान अहमद कहते हैं 'मेरे सामने बड़ा सवाल है कि इसके बाद क्या?' यही चिंता अर्थशास्त्र में पी-एच.डी. कर रहे रामानंद राम की भी है। वे पूछते हैं कि अगर अवसर बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों या प्रशासनिक सेवाओं में हो तो कोई क्यों नहीं उधर जाए? आखिरकार नौकरी तो सबको करनी है।

यह मानना होगा कि वाम के इस गढ़ में बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों का दखल बढ़ा है। स्कूल आफ आर्ट्स एंड एस्थेटिक्स और लॉ एंड गवर्नेंस जैसे स्कूलों में फोर्ड फाउंडेशन का पैसा लगाया जा रहा है। अर्थशास्त्र, विदेशी भाषा के छात्रों को बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियाँ ऊँची तनखाह देकर ले जा रही है। छात्र शोध को अधबीच छोड़कर नौकरी करने का लोभ संवरण नहीं कर पा रहे हैं। प्रश्न उठता है कि ऐसे में इस उच्च अध्ययन संस्थान में शोध का भविष्य क्या होगा ?



स्रोकार और सक्रियता

विश्वविद्यालय में यह किस्सा आम है कि पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री इंदिरा गाँधी की सरकार ने वामपंथी विचारधारा वाले बुद्धिजीवियों को एक टापू पर बिठाए रखने के लिए 1969 में जेएनयू की स्थापना की ताकि वे एक ही जगह सिमटे रहे। लेकिन विश्वविद्यालय की छात्र राजनीति कुछ अलग ही किस्सा बयां करती है। यह बात आपातकाल के दौरान ही साफ हो गई थी कि यहाँ के छात्रों के सामाजिक सरोकार और प्रखर राजनैतिक चेतना महज कैंपस तक ही सीमित नहीं है। राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी के महासचिव देवीप्रसाद त्रिपाठी (डीपीटी) आपातकाल के दौरान छात्र संघ के अध्यक्ष थे। तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री इंदिरा गाँधी, जो विश्वविद्यालय की कुलाधिपति थीं, को छात्रों के भारी विरोध का सामना करना पड़ा था। उन दिनों को याद करते हुए डीपीटी भावुक हो उठते हैं। वे कहते हैं : 'भुलाने पर जो और भी याद आए, भला कोई ऐसे को कैसे भुलाए।' जेएनयू उस दौर में तानाशाही, अधिनायकवादी शासन के प्रतिरोध का केन्द्र था। सरकार की ज्यादतियों को झेलते हुए छात्र-छात्राओं ने संघर्ष जारी रखा। त्रिपाठी मीसा के तहत गिरफ्तार कर लिए गए। फिर भी छात्र भूमिगत रहकर लोकतांत्रिक अधिकारों की पुनर्प्रतिष्ठा के लिए काम करता रहा।



जेएनयू छात्र संघ की स्थापना सितंबर 1971 में हुई। छात्र संघ का संविधान छात्र-छात्राओं ने मिलकर तैयार किया। इसे बनाने में मार्क्सवादी कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी के वर्तमान महासचिव प्रकाश कारत की प्रमुख भूमिका थी। वे 1973-74 में छात्र संघ के अध्यक्ष थे। छात्र संघ एक स्वतंत्र इकाई है जिसमें प्रशासन का कोई दखल नहीं होता। संविधान की इसी विशिष्टता के कारण ही आपातकाल के दौरान भी छात्र संघ को प्रतिबंधित नहीं किया जा सका।



1983 में विश्वविद्यालय के तत्कालीन कुलपति प्रो. पीएन श्रीवास्तव के कार्यकाल के दौरान छात्रों के एक वर्ग ने परिसर में तोड़फोड़ और हिंसा की। कुछ छात्रों को निष्कासित भी किया गया था। साथ ही प्रशासन ने छात्रों के लोकतांत्रिक हित और डेप्रिवेशन पाइंट्स जैसे प्रावधानों पर अंकुश लगाया। इस एक घटना को छोड़कर कैंपस में आमतौर पर छात्रों की राजनैतिक गतिविधियां शांतिपूर्ण रहीं। हाल के कुछ वर्षों में जरूर फिर से छात्रों के कुछ संगठनों द्वारा हिंसा की छिटपुट घटनाएं सामने आई हैं। जहां देश के अन्य विश्वविद्यालयों के छात्र संघ गैर-राजनीतिक गतिविधियों का अड्डा बन चुके हैं। जेएनयू छात्र संघ एक मॉडल के रूप में उभरा है। यहां पर छात्र संघ चुनाव खास मुद्दों को लेकर विभिन्न छात्र संगठनों में वाद-विवाद के जरिए सादगी और शांतिपूर्ण ढंग से संपन्न होता है। चुनाव एक त्योहार की तरह है जिसमें कैंपस के सभी छात्र-छात्राओं की भागीदारी होती है। अमूमन यहां का हर छात्र किसी न किसी छात्र संगठन का सदस्य होता है। एक आंकड़े के मुताबिक पहली सितम्बर 2003 तक विश्वविद्यालय में छात्र-छात्राओं की कुल संख्या 4857 थी। छात्र संघ चुनाव के एक दिन पहले होने वाला अध्यक्षीय वाद-विवाद इस चुनाव का दिलचस्प पहलू है। नब्बे के दशक से पहले यहां की छात्र राजनीति एसएफआई (स्टूडेंट फेडरेशन आफ इंडिया) विरुद्ध एफटी (फ्री थींकर्स) के द्विध्रुवीय कोने तक ही सिमटी थी। नब्बे के बाद राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर देश में जो राजनीतिक परिदृश्य था वह यहां भी खुल कर उभरा। मंडल और मंदिर की राजनीति की अनुगुंज यहां भी सुनाई दी। इन्हीं वर्षों में अखिल भारतीय विद्यार्थी परिषद, नेशनल स्टूडेंट यूनियन आफ इंडिया और आल इंडिया स्टूडेंट एसोसिएशन उभरा।



उन दिनों को याद करते हुए 1993-94 में छात्र संघ के अध्यक्ष रह चुके प्रणय कृष्ण कहते हैं : एसएफआई की वाम राजनीति से बेहतर विकल्प और दक्षिणपंथी छात्र राजनीति से आई चुनौती को आईसा ने बखूबी स्वीकार किया। दिवंगत छात्र नेता चंद्रशेखर, जिनकी 31 मार्च 1997 को बिहार के सिवान में

हत्या कर दी गई, के जुझारू व्यक्तित्व को उस दौर के छात्र आज भी याद करते हैं। चंद्रशेखर आईसा से दो बार छात्र संघ के अध्यक्ष चुने गए थे। वाम के इस गढ़ में एबीवीपी के संदीप महापात्रा 2000–2001 में अध्यक्ष चुने गए थे। यहां छात्र-छात्राओं का एक बड़ा वर्ग है जो राजनीति को आपदधर्म के रूप में लेता है। हालांकि हाल के सालों में राजनीति के प्रति एक किस्म की उदासीनता और करिअर के प्रति विशेष सक्रियता दिखाई देती है। पर वर्तमान छात्र संघ की अध्यक्ष मोना दास इससे इंकार करती हैं। वे छात्रों की राजनीतिक जागरूकता के रूप में एक बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनी के कॉफी कार्नर के विरुद्ध इसी साल तैयार जनमत का उदाहरण देती हैं। पर जैसा कि छात्र संघ के अध्यक्ष रह चुके (1974–1975) प्रो. आनंद कुमार कहते हैं : 'राजनीति के प्रति निराशा और उदासीनता पूरे देश में है... फिर भी जेएनयू के छात्रों ने अपने परिसर की जरूरतों और देश, दुनिया के प्रति एक न्यूनतम सरोकार और सक्रियता की परंपरा को बनाए रखा है।'

— अरविंद दास

(जनसत्ता, रविवार 31 जुलाई 2005 से साभार)

जेएनयू का बौद्धिक परिवेश और मेरा अनुभव

शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय को अन्तरराष्ट्रीय ख्याति प्राप्त है। यह भारत का शीर्ष बौद्धिक केन्द्र बन चुका है। यहां के उर्वर मस्तिष्क वाले छात्र नवोदित भारत को दिशा देने में सक्षम हैं और आसेतु हिमालय के विस्तृत भूभाग में वे ऐसा अलख जगा भी रहे हैं। भारतीय संविधान के परिप्रेक्ष्य में राष्ट्रीय एकता एवं अखंडता, धर्मनिरपेक्षता और मानवीय संवेदना सरीखे मुद्दों की वकालत करने तथा अंतरराष्ट्रीय विचारधाराओं का भारतीय परिप्रेक्ष्य में मूल्यांकन करके सम्बर्द्धन और संरक्षण करने में यहां के मौजूद और यहां से मुक्त हो चुके शिक्षाविदों और छात्रों का योगदान अहम माना जाता है। यहां के बौद्धिक परिवेश का मैं कायल हूँ और मेरे जीवन को जीवंतता प्रदान करने में इसका अहम योगदान है।

मैं उन लमहों को नहीं भूल पाता हूँ जब मुझे यहां प्रवेश पाने का मौका मिला एक मानविकी विषय के स्नातक छात्र के रूप में। तब मैं जिन ग्रामीण पृष्ठभूमि वाले शहर भागलपुर (बिहार) जो एक विलेज टाउन है, से यहां आया था। हमारे रोल मॉडल कुछ और थे और सोच भी कुछ ऐसी वैसी ही। किन्तु यहां के ग्लोबल इन्चायरमेंट ने मेरे दिलोदिमाग को इतना प्रभावित और प्रेरित किया कि न केवल मेरा रोल मॉडल बदल गया बल्कि सोचने समझने का तरीका भी। मुझे यह बताने में कोई संकोच नहीं है कि आज भी ग्रामीण पृष्ठभूमि वाले लोगों का रोल मॉडल कोई दबंग व्यक्ति होता है और विधिक शक्तियों से लैस नौकरशाह। धनी मानी व्यक्ति भी इन जैसों से संबंध स्थापित करने को लालायित रहते हैं। ये विद्वानों के कद्रदान हैं या वैसे ही जैसा होना चाहिए। यह मेरा सौभाग्य ही रहा कि मैं उस भागलपुर के एक अति प्रतिष्ठित टीएनबी कॉलेज का छात्र था। यह वही भूखंड है जहां के पुरातन विक्रमशिला विश्वविद्यालय में कभी ज्ञान और बौद्धिक जगत की अंतरराष्ट्रीय लहरें/तरंगें हिलोरा लिया करती थी और दूर-दूर के विद्वान यहां पढ़ने आते थे। लिहाजा ज्ञान की प्राप्ति के प्रति मुझमें ललक थी पर वैसा वातावरण वहां नहीं था। बौद्धिक सम्पदा को हासिल करने और सम्बर्द्धित करने की जिज्ञासा मुझमें थी। और हमारे प्रारंभिक गुरुजन इसके लिए हर वक्त प्रोत्साहित भी करते थे मेरे टैलेन्ट को देखते हुए लेकिन उस वातावरण ने मुझे एक हद तक प्रभावित किया। फिर भी दुनिया को समझने के लिए मेरा ज्ञान पिपासु मन उतावला था और इसी उतावलेपन ने मुझे मेट्रोपालिटन कल्चर और ग्लोबल परिवेश के सम्मिश्रण से समृद्ध जेएनयू कैम्पस की ओर सहज ही आकर्षित कर डाला। छात्र जीवन में मैं अपने सीनियर्स से यहां के बारे में सुना करता था, लेकिन यहां के छात्र के रूप में मैंने जो महसूस किया वह आम नहीं खास था। खास इस मायने में कि यहां से अलग होकर कश्मीर से कन्याकुमारी और कच्छ से सिलचर तक के किसी भी भूभाग में कार्यरत या उदयमान। जेएनयू का कोई भी विद्यार्थी उस माहौल को पुनः पाने के लिए लालायित रहता है जैसा वह अरावली की वादियों में स्थित जेएनयू कैम्पस में गुजार (बीता) चुका होता है पर मिलता है उसे कार्मेटिक व्यक्तित्व।

मैं भारतीय सभ्यता और संस्कृति के उदात्त विचारों से अनुप्राणित रहा हूँ। शुरू में यहां का पश्चिमी सभ्यता और संस्कृति सरीखा खुलापन कुछ अटपटा लगा लेकिन वह नितांत वेस्टर्न नहीं दिखा। भारतीय परिवेश में वह खुलापन एक हद तक सार्थक लगा और हमारी संस्कृति भी इससे समृद्ध हुई।

मेरे अंदर में कुछ कर गुजरने की जिज्ञासा की जो लौ प्रज्वलित होती रहती थी, उसे यहां के परिवेश से एक प्रेरणा मिली। दरअसल मेरी जिज्ञासा की लौ के लिए जेएनयू कैम्पस एक प्रयोगशाला की तरह दिखा जिसमें मैं अपने विचारों का प्रयोग करता रहा और इसी से मुझे दिशा भी मिली। यहां के छात्र गुट से कभी प्रभावित नहीं रहा और यहां के गुजरते दिनों के हर पल से सीख लेने को प्रयासरत रहा। यहां के मेस, ढाबा, कैटीन, लायब्रेरी आदि जगहों पर जो बौद्धिक आदान-प्रदान का अवसर मिलता है, वह क्लास रूम के अलावा अपने आपको जानने और तरासने का अच्छा मौका प्रदान करता है और मैंने इसका लाभ उठाया। जिस दिन मैं वंचित रहता उस दिन उस पल से विस्थापित रहने की टीस सालती रहती थी। मैं अपने जीवन को एक नई दिशा देने के लिए सदैव तत्पर रहा और नौकरशाही एवं व्यावसायिक प्रबंधन सरीखे स्थापित क्षेत्र से इतर



समाजसेवा के माध्यम से मानवीयता और राष्ट्रीयता के मूल्यों को सम्बद्धित करने हेतु मैंने अपने आपको समर्पित कर दिया और उसी राह का मैं एक राही हूँ और अपने सहपाठियों तथा सीनियर्स, जूनियर्स से इस दिशा में सक्रिय सोच विकसित करने की अपेक्षा भी रखता हूँ। कैम्पस के पर्व-त्योहार और छात्र चुनाव से हम सभी जिंदादिल बने और प्रजातंत्र का अर्थ समझे।

अलबत्ता जब बाहर की दुनिया हमारे मानसिक स्तर से मैच नहीं करती तो मुझे एक दूसरे से बिछुड़कर फिर से जुड़ने की तमन्ना हिलौरे मारने लगीं और अपने ही तरह के एक समाज जो कि जेएनयू के अलावा किसी और परिवेश के लोगों से मैच नहीं खाता जिसके फलस्वरूप मैंने 1998 से जेएनयू के ओल्ड ब्यायज को एक जगह इक्कट्टा करके मिलने का प्रयास किया और जब हम ऐसा करने में सफल रहे तब मैंने पाया कि एक-दूसरे से मिलने वाले लोगों में प्रौढ़ावस्था में भी किशोरावस्था का उत्साह दिखा। मैं यह उम्मीद करता हूँ कि वर्ष दर वर्ष हम सभी एक दूसरे से रूबरू होते रहेंगे और अपने तरह का समाज बनाने में सफल रहेंगे।

— ज्योति कुमार सिंह
(सदस्य, एआईसीसी, 1991-96)



ALUMNI MEMORIES

DREAM DESTINATION

When the rest of the Delhi is struggling for an inch of space to survive, 1100 acres of lush greenery comforts just 10,000 members of the JNU community. The per capita area occupied by a JNUite is the highest in the capital. With the increasing attention of the government towards building knowledge capital, JNU is going to have a financial ball also in the future. Even in the days when scholarship and financial crunch was strangulating the students, Rs. 1500/- in hand gave a royal life. With Rs. 8 a movie ticket in Priya, Rs.700 monthly mess bill, Rs.3 chai and pakoda in Ganga dhaba, life was royally led on campus. Outside the main gate it was frying with exorbitant costs and difficulty. These comforts have bred laziness in some of us and prevented from venturing out often.

Any denial of movie tickets or other services promptly attracted slogan shouting and dharnas. Fearing such unwanted scenes, JNUites were given special treatment in the capital. Even a shoe shop owner in Saroji Nagar market melts his heart and gives a heavy concession of 25% when he hears the usual bargain plea of a JNUite. *"Bhaiya hum student hai. Hamare pass itne paise kahan hai?"* Without any class distinction JNUites adopt the same technique. It is where students from upper class families were forced to abandon their class arrogance and became enlightened citizens. Some of them have become national heroes fighting for the "proletariat". In chasing this dream destination a few could not find an exit.

I remember the popular joke. A fresher in the month of September was struggling to find a way to the North Gate to walk down to Basant Lok. He asked his senior for the way out and got a philosophical reply. "I am in the campus for ten years and not finding a way out and you came last month to find an exit?" This statement summarizes the difficulty of a firmly rooted campus member.

Another gentleman came to the campus for B.A in 1990 and reached the final stage of Ph.D in 2002. Despite five years of Ph.D, he could not write a single chapter. Citing the impact of communal violence in Gujarat on his psyche he got one year extension beyond the IX B clause. Still he could not move forward in his thesis work. Next year he applied for a fresh Ph.D in a newly formed centre. This was to avail of the cool campus life for five more years! Complaints poured against such mockery cases to the dean. Not knowing what to do with this emotionally attached senior most student member, the Dean pulled the main plug and said "you can do ten more Ph.Ds but we cannot provide you the hostel". Next week the disappointed JNUite joined a college to teach.

A JNUite who is working in a topmost MNC is often seen in the campus even after his exit five years earlier. He had a readymade reply to those who asked him for the reason for frequent trips to campus. "I come for a haircut here which is cheapest in the city (Rs.15)". From Kamla Nagar he drives down every week for haircut! The petrol cost for his travel is Rs.250 and the haircut cost is Rs.15. One can hear such stories often from the deeply rooted former JNU students.

If one thinks that this is the case of a few abnormal students, it is wrong. A reputed professor, after all the possible extensions, kept postponing the surrender of his official house. When I went to his house on the final day, he was sitting in the centre of his empty house with two hands on cheek. "Look at my status. I don't feel like going away from this place" he said. Despite having a palatial residence 30 kms away from the campus, his emotional attachment with JNU refused him to be detached. One can see more evidence for this from the large-scale presence of retired JNU staff in and around Munirka.

In a short period of four decades, the university has carved a niche for itself in the entire South Asia. It has become the popular Indian stop over for every visiting foreign dignitary. Today no government policy making body, news channel, print media, academic institution, embassy is complete without the presence of a JNUite. Civil service is another area



where JNU students make a distinct mark in large numbers every year. Some of the latest scientific achievements have come from the campus. Americans are hunting for JNU brains to fix anthrax problems.

From my personal observations of 8 years, I can firmly say that students from extremely backward regions have reached top positions. They started with no basics including knowledge and money. Now they are shining with all glory. If today Kalahandi, Koraput, Keonjar, Gaya, Nalanda, Bhagalpur, Chitrakoot is brimming with hope, it is because of some of the proud JNUites.



The universal image of a JNUite is “jholawala” who talks passionately about social inequalities. When some one in the world starts with “there is a gap between rich and poor” then rest of the crowd can sense the speaker is from JNU.

Study, struggle, simplicity and survival are the four mantras. In scholarship the university has established a special name. In the struggle to achieve student rights no university has played such a powerful role in the world in recent times. Simplicity is the lifeline of JNU. A stranger can never believe the global popularity of some of the eminent scholars of the campus from their appearance. Profs. Bipin Chandra and Yogendra Singh still reflect that trademark simplicity despite conquering intellectual Everest peaks. I often abandon the desire for consumer durables because of my teachers, Profs. Anand Kumar and Avijit Pathak. They carry the aura of simplicity and continue to have an impact on me. Prof. Varyam Singh and Saxena are walking geniuses keeping alive the rich tradition of the prestigious university.



Any visitor can decode the unique culture of JNU. With the presence of students from all states of the country and fifty nationalities, it showcases itself as an ethno museum. A fine mix of radicals and liberals keep the arguments interesting. Agreeing to disagree is the fine line adopted here. Marx, Manu and Mahatma were given life in everyday debates. No wonder the presidential debates during student election attract the largest media contingent for any such university event in the world. Our election is our main festival.



There is a vast change in the outlook and lifestyles of the campus members, in these days of globalization and consumer culture. From kurta pajama to Pepe jeans and T-shirts, from scribbling pads to laptops, from walking to driving, from roti sabzi to pizzas, doubtlessly the unchangeable world of JNU has changed finally. Call centres and cool centres have taken them away to give money for work to spend to enjoy. But, despite all physical changes the typical JNUite will remain a JNUite at heart and soul.

A. Prabakaran, Director, Public Action

AFTER ME THE DELUGE!

It was the most distinguished group of historians closeted in one single room that I had encountered yet. I walked in to face the interview for admission to M.Phil/Ph.D at the Centre of Historical Studies (CHS) on a rather sultry forenoon. That I could not put names to the faces helped to mitigate the intimidating feeling. I was soon put at ease though questions flew from various directions. I had proposed to work on the Tamil 'Renaissance' and was therefore on a strong wicket. Was it my delusion that my enthusiastic responses had dazzled the committee! The interview had gone on for a reasonable time when what turned out to be the last question was thrown at me: 'Who taught you the history of Tamilnadu?' I had studied through distance education, I said somewhat sheepishly. A hushed silence fell on the room.

Fancying a bank job would give me the financial security to pursue a literary career I had studied B.Com. In my first year in college I stepped into the Archives tracking the inspiring figure of V.O. Chidambaram Pillai. In the musty corridors of the Tamilnadu Archives Clio, the muse seduced me. By the end of college I was sure that I wanted to be a historian. Dissatisfied with the state of social science in Tamilnadu I chose to acquire a post-graduate degree in History through correspondence course while working at the amazing library called Maraimalai Adigal Library. By the time I came to JNU I had published works of history and had contributed to journals such as EPW.

To the lasting credit of CHS not only was I selected but also topped the lista fact resented by my batch mates! I was agog with excitement. Even as I waited for the results to be announced I explored the campus, its bookshops and library. Looking forward to being in JNU. Of meeting and learning from scholars whom I had only read.

I took a week's break to say goodbye to my family in Chennai. But when I returned the campus had changed unrecognisably. After me it was the deluge, quite literally! I had left a left-radical campus. But returned to find students under the banner of anti-reservation.

They were heady days. The experience of living away from home. On one's own. With nothing to do but read, talk, argue.... Drafting pamphlets. Criticizing others'. Add to it classroom lectures. Seminars. Dinner-time meetings. Given the social stigma attached to studying history in Tamilnadu ('Going all the way to Delhi, to study history!' my neighbour's comment) the pride of place that history commands in JNU was exhilarating.

Student politics in Tamilnadu had been killed by MGR. Strikes by students for the Tamils killed in Sri Lanka an annual ritual had meant only holidays. So the experience of JNUSU was novel. The system of JNUSU elections conducted by the students themselves is something we can all be proud of. The galaxy of big politicians who came to campaign was spectacular. As is the tradition of having to field questions after the talk.

With no idea of the demands of tutorial writing a particularly rigorous CHS regimen that I am eternally grateful for I hopped from class to class auditing courses and attending lectures. It was the last year of teaching for Romila Thapar and Bipan Chandra. Romila's surgical precision of lecturing and Bipan's evangelical zeal to prevent the misguided sheep from following the Satanic Subalterns were impressive. Neeladri Bhattacharya's engagement with the latest in scholarship and an insatiable enthusiasm for every new idea were inspirational.

Ganga Dhaba was an institution. E.P. Thompson was said to have drunk tea there. But I stuck to Nilgiri Dhaba. I ate the first stuffed parathas of my life. The combination of aloo paratha and double-egg bujjiya (actually made of only one and a half eggs) is unbeatable. Meals at Gopalan's (the only canteen in the world to provide library facilities) was an apology for a south Indian but appreciated all the same.

Lest it be thought I am digressing too much on matters culinary let me say that it determined my JNU life. The daily staple of dry rotis, aloo and dhal is enough to make any Tamil contemplate murder, mayhem or renunciation. The smell of Poorvanchal Hostel mess, my first introduction to hostel food, still haunts my nightmares (like the toilets!). In a



semester's time I had caught gastritis, its effects unshakeable after almost two decades, prompting me to opt for a direct PhD. With a particularly understanding supervisor in K.N. Panikkar I finished 'a very un-JNU-like dissertation' (in the words, a compliment presumably, of a historian I respect,) which I am told is the quickest at CHS. Such is the power of food!

JNU, I have found over the years, has opened doors for me across the world even if one has had to be at the receiving end of petty-minded prejudice in provincial universities where I taught for many years. I have little patience for the question whether one is a Marxist, communist, Leftist all used synonymously.



The greatest education was the community. The student profile was truly national. My Tamil 'chauvinism' notwithstanding, I made more friends among other linguistic communities. The awareness of difference enriched me. The political culture of Kerala. The protest songs of the left. My earlier mainstream indifference to the North-East. The ignorance of Hindi zealots. I knew more about Premchand and Vidyapati than the Hindi advocates (who are of two kinds: the first insist that all Indians learn Hindi compulsorily while the second assert that it be voluntary).



I loved JNU. But detested Delhi. The rudeness and the rush of the city sickened me. Civility was sadly missing. Rudeness was the armour. Aggression the primary form of engagement with the fellow citizen. So I stayed cocooned in JNU which, compared to the big bad Delhi outside, was 'the heart of a heartless world, the sigh of the oppressed', until it became the opium of intellectuals.

A.R. Venkatachalapathy, Professor, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai. He studied at CHS during 1990-94.

DEGREE NO 01

Actually I was a student of the Institute of Russian Studies which was founded in 1965. JNU was inaugurated on the 14 November, 1969 through its very first Convocation. Since I.R.S. was merged into JNU, our batch was the first official batch of students passing out of JNU. We received our degrees in the inaugural convocation. Since my roll number was 01, I received degree no. 01 from JNU. That is how I am associated with JNU. I remember that the function was held at Vigyan Bhawan and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan was present on the occasion. So, in a sense, we were the first students of the University.



A university must groom pioneers in all fields of social life. Idealism must be encouraged and social ailments such as casteism must be eradicated. This has unfortunately not happened in most of the Indian Universities. According to Nehru, a university is a place where all kinds of knowledge blossom. It should be a place where the young generation comes into full bloom. Etymologically, it is a place of universal values. It is therefore a place where universal values (and not globalization) must thrive.

Universities should not produce robots. Universities must not be used for vested interests. Universities must not create committees for inequality. Inequality in terms of caste has been perpetuated for centuries. But universities in India must strive to discontinue this and show a way to the nation.

Abhay Maurya, Vice-Chancellor, EFLU

MY YEARS AT JNU

JNU is a world in itself. It has a beautiful campus isolated from the rest of the city. The campus is located on a hilly terrain in the south of Delhi. The terrain being an extension of the *Aravali hills* is home to many species of plants and animals. The campus is extremely beautiful and looks as if this place was just created for this University. It has some kind of magical influence on the new entrants who suddenly turn to a new dress code mainly *kurta-pajama* and *chappals*, and take an ideological leaning to the left. JNU is known as the bastion of the left and to an extent this image has stayed on the campus since the day it was founded. Since that time in the annual student presidential elections the left parties have been dominating. A sub-culture has evolved within the campus over the years. It enriches the lives of the new-comers and in turn they get enriched by the experiences brought by the students from the different regions, cultures, religions and societies who join the mainstream of JNU. It has many residential hostels where students from the different parts of the country live and study. The campus has many *Dhabas* that serve tea, snacks and other necessities of the students at subsidized rates. One of the *Dhabas* named after the river Ganges 'Ganga *dhaba*' is very popular among the students inside as well as outside the JNU campus. It is a symbol of the JNU sub-culture as is the bus number 615 which links the main city from the campus. Thus from the ideological leaning to the dress code and the means of transport and places to eat, JNU stands apart from the rest of the Universities in India. In the terms of gender equality and liberty the campus is the most liberal in the country. It has the hostels where the boys and the girls live and dine together. There is no restriction on the movement of the students anywhere and anytime in the campus except that boys can't enter the girls' hostels while girls can come to boys' hostels.

In these settings I joined JNU in the late August of the year 2000, the School of Social Sciences in the Center for the Study of Regional Development (CSRSD) for a Master of Arts degree in Geography. I had joined this course with the hope that it will allow me enough time to study for my Civil Services exam but on the contrary it hardly gave me time to recreate. I decided to leave the course and straight away prepare for the competitive exam. I knew that I would face the problem of accommodation if I left JNU. Now I was in a dilemma. I had to think something fast as time was running out. I looked for some options to live outside the campus but it created new problems- the problem of heavy monthly rent and food. JNU hostels at least ensured that I could manage in just Rupees 1000 per month and food was taken care of by the hostel mess. I decided to stay in the campus, do the course and prepare for the Civil Services exam at the same time. How could I do that in the limited time I had? I made myself very focused. I did not need a MA degree but I needed the hostel so I continued in the course but just on the fringes while I found the right kind of people to prepare for the exam.

Today I am in the Indian Foreign Service posted in Moscow. I owe a big debt to JNU for shaping my goals constructively and taking me to the peak of my career.

Abhay.K, IFS

MY EXPERIENCE OF JNU OF THE 70S

To say that JNU was a turning point in the lives of many of us who joined JNU during the 70s would be an understatement. However, the experience of most institutions of higher learning would contribute to change for those who pass through its corridors; so what was so distinct about JNU?

The environment in JNU during those years was dynamic full of ideological debates, intellectual striving and an overwhelming social concern. This was no ivory tower of academic learning but one with inspiring teachers, a vibrant student community and a certain kind of political milieu that forced you to connect with the wider socio-economic, political as well as the cultural reality both nationally and internationally. This did not imply a mere academic



engagement but demanded a commitment to processes of change both individually and socially. One was forced to think beyond oneself. Even for the most determined it was difficult to be untouched by the idealism that prevailed.

The campus politics was dominated by left student organizations, so even those who argued against it were forced to respond on the agenda of the left. The seriousness of approach, intellectual engagement backed by rigorous academic learning was an important aspect of this tradition and set the tone of the campus life and its concerns. As a result JNU despite being an extremely politically charged university was able to maintain high academic standards and discipline even during extensive political action or protest.



But the irreverence for authority, tradition and all that passed as 'normal' due to persistent questioning shook many of us to the core and challenged many of our fundamental beliefs. The challenge was even greater because the issue was not just to reproduce the right arguments in term papers and exams but of assimilation into one's basic value system. Such contradictions were personally difficult to resolve and put many students under great stress. However, participation at different levels in student bodies, in academic debates, or just arguing at Chacha's dhaba helped us understand not only issues but also ourselves.



JNU was relatively small in those days and the student population, both girls and boys, interacted rather closely. Thanks to the admission policy at that time there could not be a more socially, culturally and economically diverse group than the student body of JNU. Many of us were confronted with the 'other' who we had never interacted with, understood, or appreciated, I think this was another important characteristic of JNU which contributed not only to a better social understanding but to our questioning many latent prejudices which we carried as a result of being products of an extremely hierarchical society. Many myths of class/urban monopoly of knowledge and wisdom were shattered. This is not to say that JNU created an ideal democratic and egalitarian society within the campus; it had all the contradictions of its time after all, it remained a part of a wider society but each prejudice was questioned, each act of unfairness was condemned. I feel extremely proud and grateful for having been part of JNU of the 70s.

Abhilasha Kumari, 1974-76 Batch

MY DAYS AT JNU

It has almost been twenty years since I left JNU. (I was there from 1982 to 1988) Looking back at those days I have a pleasant sense of nostalgia. Amidst a rigorous academic schedule we found time to make friends, to make our choices regarding what we were doing and what path we would eventually take. We also invested considerable amount of time in actually working on our choices. These choices could revolve around an academic



project or a political one. Of course in those days for many of us the two were interlinked.

Why was the question of choice important to us? I believe it stemmed from a deep rooted belief that we could actually work our way through any situation. This optimism was important in the global context of cold war rivalries and a society frozen from the fears of a possible nuclear winter. Here in JNU was a niche where we could debate, deliberate and come up with options. That the real world outside imposed constraints on exercising these options we were well aware, but the important thing was that we could dream and also see some of us carrying our dreams forward.

In retrospect what were our limitations? I think we erred too much on the side of the 'political'. We let the 'political' encroach on the possibilities which the civil society held out for us. Don't get me wrong. I am not jettisoning the political choices we or I made. But in the process I think we could not overcome the very frozen state the political institutions of that time were caught up in. Thus perhaps we scripted our way back in to the labyrinths we were trying to get out of.

Ajay Mahurkar, CHS/SSS, 1982-88

A VISION IN RS. 400/-

I joined JNU in 1990 after my graduation from Utkal University, Orissa. The reason for coming to JNU was to build my career. Before 1990, all the while I was in a town which had only one college and was away from the hub of learning in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. I was convinced that I can not do anything except farming unless I left the village. I found a friend who was studying in JNU and he inspired me to come to JNU, where I could get not only the best of education but also an affordable environment. To be precise, I had never even dreamt that one could study in Delhi with Rs. 400 per month, that too in a premier institute like JNU. The admission test was an excellent and fair way of getting into the university and pursuing education.

I'll put it in the simplest words, (and believe me, I'm not exaggerating) my JNU experience is that piece of my life around which all my success, achievements and accomplishments have evolved. Learning, no doubt, was incredible but the most important thing was that despite lacking in good communication skills and control over English language I could learn and complete my M.A. and I also made it to M.Phil which I could never complete.

One lovely aspect of my life in JNU was my relationship with GJV Prasad, my my teacher in English who taught me in Hinglish and encouraged me to speak and get command over the English language. I just can't forget till the end of my life that whatever I have achieved today comes from only those three years of inspiring association with my teachers in JNU. I would also like to thank all those who taught me Prof. Kapil Kapoor, Prof. Harish Narang, Prof. Vaishna Narang. Prof. Sareen, Prof. Gill, Prof. Gupta, and Prof. Meenakshi Mukherjee. They might have forgotten me as I was the lowest scoring student but I can not forget them and I think that together they formed a great pool of knowledge.

My colleagues in JNU were arguably the best. In their association I learnt a lot. Most importantly, being a guy who could not afford even the monthly fee of Rs. 400, I was supported by my colleagues financially too. What else can I ask for from the University?

JNU culture is not only about classroom studies but also about the library, Ganga Dhaba discussions over tea, post-dinner meetings with guests in the dining hall who come from different streams to discuss various aspects of the socio-economic scenario of the county. It gives you knowledge and confidence to face any given situation and an ability to make correct decisions.

Well, JNU was never relaxed for me. I was the captain of the Cricket and Football team of the university. I promoted sports which the university guys never got involved in. Hence, I was always busy after classes.

The fundamentals, on which this university was built to bring forth the most deprived students from the remotest places in the country and to provide education at the most affordable rates, still continue to mesmerize me. Being a



rustic and having no means to afford even the bare minimum, I am proud to say that the university gave me the education and ability to become what the university gave me education and ability to become what I am today despite all odds. Hence the message is that JNU is one of the best places for all those who want to learn and who have a vision. It has given me life. What else can one ask for from a university? However much the path ahead looks difficult, just don't give up. I would like to convey my best wishes to all the JNUites. If I can ever be of any help to any of you, I would be more than happy to do it you are all my family members of JNU.... I owe a lot to this place.

Akshaya Sethi, Future Generali

AN ISLAND OF GRACE AND STRENGTH



I joined JNU for an MA in English literature in 1997 after completing graduation from Miranda House, Delhi University and was a student of the university till 2005. As a new student, many things immediately struck me as remarkable sharing courses and classroom space with seniors without any sense of hierarchy, having classmates from very diverse socio-economic and regional backgrounds, the friendly and democratic approach of teachers towards students especially manifested in my Centre through teaching methods wherein students were allowed to take the lead in classroom discussions with the faculty merely moderating our views, and a spontaneous strike and mass demonstration of students and teachers against an incident of rape of a minor girl in JNU who was being trafficked into sex trade.



Being a student who had been active in sports, drama and other activities during college days, I initially missed most of the action in JNU as a day-scholar. So, three months into the university, when one of my seniors broached the topic of contesting elections from the SFI, noticing my somewhat leftwing views, I enthusiastically jumped at the opportunity of participating in 'extra-curricular' activities. Soon, however, I was drawn deeply into the student movement of JNU, holding the posts of SL Councillor, Joint Secretary, Vice-President (twice) and President (2001-02) of the JNUSU from the combined left platform of the SFI-AISF.



During those years, the battle lines within JNU student politics were clearly drawn on the one hand was the ABVP which was motivated by the growth of the RSS-BJP at the Centre, and on the other were the left, democratic and secular forces represented by the SFI-AISF combine which was motivated to defend the liberal, secular and peaceful ethos of JNU and the country. JNU faced several challenges and attacks during those years aimed at changing the character of our university, including attempts to start self-financing courses or impose user charges...

It was the strength of the student-teacher-karmachari unity in JNU that often salvaged us from difficult situations be it the arrest of 63 students in 1999 for an agitation demanding more hostels and ratification of the Rules

and Procedures of GSCASH coupled with the imposition and immediate withdrawal of *sine die* in our university; the institution of a Judicial Bahri Commission of Enquiry after an incident of violence instigated by two revolver wielding outsiders during an Indo-Pak Mushaira held in 2000 (who later turned out to be Kargil returned army officers and the RSS-BJP started accusing JNU of harboring ISI agents); attempt to impose a Code of Conduct upon JNU students seeking to ban all forms of democratic protests in the university on the basis of a High Court injunction in 2000; or the attempt to change the entire future of our university through the 10th Plan Proposals. Not only did the JNU community resist all these moves, but significant advances were also made in various areas affecting students' day-to-day life including construction of 6 new hostels in JNU in the era of fund cuts, computers and free internet access for students, formation of the Dalit Advisory Committee (later renamed as the Equal Opportunity Office), etc.

However, one of the most significant developments of all was the pioneering formation of the Gender Sensitization Committee against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH) on 8th March 1999 following a protracted struggle of over two years in the backdrop of incidents of rape and molestation in JNU. Just as during the early years of our university, when the students of JNU painstakingly drafted the constitution of the JNUSU and compelled the Administration to accept the democratic institution of the JNUSU that was governed entirely by students, the late nineties witnessed continuous struggles for the formation and recognition of the GSCASH comprising of students, teachers, karmacharis and officers. After a decade of struggle, the body finally earned full statutory status in April 2007. It was the debates for ensuring greater gender justice that led to the formation of the GSCASH and the formulation of its democratic rules and procedures in the backdrop of the Supreme Court verdict on sexual harassment in the Vishaka vs State of Rajasthan case of 1997. However, continuous vigilance for the democratic and accountable functioning of the GSCASH is essential for ensuring that the body remains true to its purpose and delivers on a sustained basis on the promise of providing justice to victims of sexual harassment in JNU.

The one vote victory of the ABVP on the President's post in 2000 saw students of JNU vote with a vengeance for the SFI-AISF combine in 2001, in the backdrop of the hysteria created by the US for its 'war on terror'. A decisive struggle that year was the struggle against the 10th Plan Proposals which were prepared undemocratically during the extended tenure of the outgoing VC. Massive struggles within JNU against the outrageous 10th Plan Proposals, which was rejected in toto by both the JNUSU and JNUTA, were yielding no results against an unaccountable administration. The JNUSU decided that the situation called for some drastic action and finally laid siege at the VC's Office, demanding immediate appointment of a new VC to JNU. The President of India heard this desperate plea, called the JNUSU and made the impossible possible by appointing a new VC to JNU within one week. The 10th Plan Proposals were rejected lock, stock and barrel under the term of the new VC.

During those years, the spontaneous reaction of the JNU community against the Gujarat carnage in 2002 and continuous participation in protest programmes for over two months was the most decisive assertion of the secular, democratic values by our university. After the gruesome incident in Godhra on 27th February 2002, the JNUSU gave a call for a silent march. The JNU community organized on an unprecedented scale a huge Human Chain in defence of our secular tradition in order to send this unequivocal message out of JNU that peace and harmony must prevail in the entire country in the face of VHP's impending *shila daan* programme. Subsequently, students and teachers of JNU went on fact-finding missions, collected relief fund and material, went in teams to extend legal aid to victims in relief camps etc. So emphatic was the response from our university against the Gujarat pogrom that the like of Ashok Singhal and Praveen Togadia could not refrain themselves from demanding the closure of JNU.

In the context of JNU, it is often said by both our adversaries as well as friends that JNU is an 'island'. However, ever since its inception, every member of this university has been a part of a larger battle of ideas a battle entailing the assertion of the principles of equality, secularism, democracy, social justice and scientific thinking for the prosperity of our nation and its people. It is the same spirit that comprises the foundation of the impeccable academic standards of JNU, wherein, we are imparted courage in our classrooms to test every argument and theory with reason, instead of



giving our consent to just prevalent or dominant ideas. It is the same value system that provides a liberal and free space to students coming from diverse backgrounds to spend their life in JNU with responsibility. Being part of JNU during the eventful years of 1997 to 2005 has taught me, like many others, the vital importance of defending the values that this 'island' stands for. I wish all the JNU alumni the very best on this occasion, for it is the same set of just values that we all carry from our university to many parts of our country and the world.

Albeena Shakil, Former President, JNUSU

MY YEARS IN JNU

For me, 1974-79, the years that I spent in JNU remain a period which I recall only with great happiness, not simply because of the wonderful friends I made in JNU but also because of the academic and scholastic ambience of the place and the fact that it nourished thinking and creativity. The uniqueness of the JNU-experience of those days is that even today, for most of us, the only visiting card one needs to open doors is the credential that we were once JNU-ites; I have known colleagues to respond with alacrity once they learn that the person on the other end is a former JNU student. How many institutions can boast of such a strong affiliation and allegiance?

But then, 1974 was a long time ago and the JNU we grew up in was quite different from the one we occasionally visit nowadays. My first hostel was in Block A, in what was known as 'the old campus' and then, I migrated 'upwards' to the new hostels: first Periyar and then, finally to Sutlej. The total number of students was also small and everyone very much knew everyone.

We were all young at that time and passionate about everything. At one level, it had to do with Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* and Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. We wanted to change the world and lived in the world created by the writings of Gunder Frank and Samir Amin, Marcuse and Marx, Camus and Sartre, Ivan Illich and Maurice Godelier. Our vocabulary was replete with words like 'emancipation' and 'empowerment', 'imperialism' and 'oppression', 'freedom' and 'revolution'. I believe it made us better persons as we learnt to look beyond the narrow confines that we lived in or the comfortable lives that we came from. There was another world 'out there' and it was JNU that opened our eyes to it. For that, I will always remain beholden.

JNU was always hugely 'political' but in a uniquely different way than the word is commonly understood these days. The themes and ideas that interested JNU-ites were 'political'; their thinking focused on social and economic issues and to that extent, was political; their support for causes was politically driven. But uniquely, in the years that I was in JNU, it was an institution that encouraged independent and free thinking, and it is to the credit of JNU that groupings existed such as the Free Thinkers that had absolutely no affiliation to any political party. It was this spirit of 'free



thinking' or radical doubt that epitomized the thinking that was encouraged in JNU in those 'good old years'. A view or a position could be taken on national and international issues that was entirely driven by our own thought process rather than one that was decided outside and 'delivered' to us for consumption. The ability to think and to think independently and freely was JNU's special gift to us all.

And who can forget the lectures by professors like Sarvapelli Gopal and Romilla Thapar, Sudipto Kaviraj and Yogendra Singh, M L Sondhi and T K Oommen, Tapas Mazumdar and Moonis Raza, G P Deshmukh and Sudhir Kakar? One can go on and on. They shaped thinking by opening the mind to entirely alternative ways of seeing. These were teachers one can only owe an eternal debt of gratitude.

But JNU is not about all work and no play. Who can forget that mother of all table tennis matches where Sid Mukherjee came from two down to take it to three-two in a marathon three hour fight in the Sutje games room? It stands tribute to the lion heartedness of both players that the game still holds a dear place in the hearts of the JNU-ites who were privileged to watch the match.

Who can forget the hostel food of those days? I doubt if anyone has ever heard of rogan josh nutri-nugget! But we found solace in Mataji's dhaba and later on, in the kabab corner that opened up. But, desperation took us out of JNU as well, and we discovered Kamalika's and in the early days of the month, when the scholarship money came in, Golden Dragon for dinner and a film at Priya's thereafter.

And then, of course, there were all these lovely ladies who, strangely, invariably came from the rival political grouping! Many loved and lost, but everyone learnt to love again. This was the beauty of JNU.

As time passed, some colleagues sadly passed away. Many moved on, including some who went off to far away places and distant lands. Some kept in touch, others drifted away. People moved on and yet, in a way, they never left JNU. A phone call and the JNU in us is awakened!

Amit Dasgupta

JNU: THE TRADITION

When I remember my days at JNU and I recall the students days in early eighties. Those were the brightest years of the student politics in JNU. Then I recall the protests and the students' mobilization after the murder of Chandrashekhar. Entire Delhi was blocked for about ten days, more than 10,000 students from all over the country gathered in Delhi. Though it did not have any immediate success, it created waves across the nation, it transcended all divided-region, caste, religion, political affiliations and even ideological.

I would say that students of JNU have always been argumentative. Socialization at JNU is very fast and in few months, new students learn and inculcate JNU culture. Politicization in very fast, students start feeling concerned about every issue around them and a giant all kinds of injustice and inequalities. And the majority of students are like that. Their values are very strong; they are independent and progressive thinking. Every year new students inherit a long tradition of adventure of ideas, great intellectual insight, committed progressive politics and values of equality of gender, class and social status.

Amit Sengupta, Ex-President, JNUSU

SIMPLY MAGIC

When I first came to JNU, it was supposed to be for one year like all the apocryphal stories about not finding your way out of the campus, I stayed on for many more. I did try to find my way out briefly in my very first year - about one week after joining the MA programme I rushed back home to Bombay. Then I left the campus almost in tears the first time a fly fell into my cup of tea at the Nilgiri Dhabha outside Godavari. This time I only went as far as my local guardian's, so



things were already better, I guess.

Entering the JNU gates for the very first time however, did feel in a very strange way, like I was coming home. It was so different from every other place I had ever seen or been to, yet so oddly familiar and comforting. I felt the same sense of security and comfort returning in an auto every time I was off campus outside in the city streets I was tense, especially as it became dark, but as the North Gate loomed large and the noise from Ganga Dhabha floated over, one felt safe and at home.



JNU was as different from every other institution I had ever been to as any place could possibly be in fact it was almost a binary opposition. Where all the other schools I had studied in privileged English speakers, here my Hindi was laughed at, where I had always blended into the crowd with my jeans and shirts, here I stood out as (heaven forbid!) a preppie! Where my friends had always come from roughly similar backgrounds and shared similar tastes in music, reading, food, here I was with people who were not necessarily comfortable in my first language of choice, who came from vastly different socio-cultural contexts and who I would have never dreamt of having anything in common with. Except the JNU sense this can be defined in a loose way as being comfortable with you are rather than who you want to be. The JNU sense means being considerate to all other ideas, classes, habits, and ideologies except those of hatred, violence or injustice. Whether you want to or not, JNU has a way of sucking the meekest person into standing up, not only for themselves, but for others. This must be the most unusual characteristic of any educational institution, and it is the one, which must, above all things, be preserved.



My years in JNU were eventful it was during my time that AISA won the JNUSU Presidential post for the first time, that ABVP grew in strength (off campus as well as on campus) that the Babri Masjid was destroyed. Faculty members and students sat and marched together on protest marches protesting against communalism, fighting for GSCASH and even going and 'stealing' a water cooler from the Vice Chancellor's office to protest the non-functional one in the hostel.



Those years were magical the most magical thing about them was the quiet sense of strength that our university imparted to each one of us, from all our different pasts and facing all our different futures. JNU gave us a sense of empowerment, a conviction that we could change our lives, that we could lead lives of our own choosing, change circumstances that didn't suit us. One of the reasons why my intended one year became 7 was that I realised that I didn't have to leave India to shape or change my own future JNU taught me that by staying on I could shape not only my own, but also help shape a better future for others.

Angelie Multani, Joined CLE, SL in 1991 for an MA, Currently teaching Literature at the Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

REMEMBERING JNU

Thinking of JNU brings back fond memories of down campus, Francis dhaba and late nights in the library. I was familiar with JNU even before I joined it to do my M.A. in 1989 and I'd always liked the campus, especially the Poorvanchal side. The rocky, green terrain made you feel you were somewhere outside Delhi. It is still a lovely place, though some things, of course, have changed: there are more buildings today and my favourite drive entering from the gate at the VC's house to Poorvanchal is now out of bounds.

I still clearly remember the entrance exam at the Central School. The first day at the language lab down campus, meeting the other members of what would grow into a very and perhaps unusually close-knit class and shuttling between up campus, down campus and the language lab in the 666 and 615.

Coming from Delhi University it required a huge initial effort to address teachers by name. A rude awakening was the first class with Chitra when she asked us all to translate a simple sentence. I was pretty smug about my sentence and quite sure it would be praised. Until she trashed everyone's translations including mine the reasons for that would be too long to go into here but it set the tone for my two years of German Studies in JNU and my future work.

There are individual and collective memories. I don't think anyone in my class will forget how we felt like worms when we were caught having photocopied one of Vijay Chhabra's dictionaries or our heated arguments with BGC.

Amidst all the dahi vadas and mango shakes at Francis' and cold winter night bike rides through the campus, one other memory that really stands out is the basketball tournament in my final year, which the JNU women's team the absolute underdogs won! While the two years, of course, came to an end, I am glad that eighteen years down the line, my association with JNU hasn't.

Anya Malhotra, Translator-Interpreter

JNU DAYS

I was in JNU between 1972 and 1976, initially as a student in the inaugural MA class in Sociology and later as an M.Phil student, at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems. Originary times are often the most open and flexible times when an institution is amenable to innovation. At the time of its formation, JNU was itself an innovation as a national university.

As a largely research university, the total number of students enrolled was small but its student body was diverse, coming from different corners of the nation. In fact one of my lasting impressions of JNU has been its all-India student body and the exposure to variant cultural habits and practices.

In terms of academics, the semester system was novel to us coming from traditional universities (in my case Jadavpur University). The furious pace and intensity of academic instruction left us bewildered at times, more so because we came from non-social science backgrounds. But we soon had to get used to the customised jargon and language of social science research. It was in JNU that we realised that more than the classroom it was the library which was the locus of knowledge. Of course the classroom mediated our use of the Library, but strenuous efforts were made by our teachers to transform us into independent scholars rather than rote learning students. The freedom given to us to form our independent opinion also made us recognise the responsibility of scholarship. The Library was crucial also because our curricula included more references to journal articles and monographs rather than textbooks. Hence the papers that we wrote as assignments were largely dependent on our Library resources.

Another aspect of JNU student life was the democratic nature of student politics. The debates and discussions which preceded major student union decisions was time consuming but public. The intense all night debate before the first students' strike in 1974 set very high standards of democratic norms. Moreover, during the National Emergency when



the students occupied the campus to protest the arrest of student leaders, academic activities were sought to be continued outside the classroom by keeping the Library open and having teach-ins by senior students and research scholars. In other words student politics was academically informed and with a national perspective and hardly involved a negative or sectarian outlook.

The highly positive impression that I carry of JNU is perhaps because of my association with it in its formative stage when rigidities had not crept in. So I would like to retain that impression of the 'bliss' that the rigours of advanced academics imparted to me.

Anjan Ghosh, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta



SIS FLASHBACKS FOR A JOURNALIST CONTINENTS AWAY

Continents away from the red brick JNU, in the green glass-fronted United Nations building in New York, the classrooms of the School of International Studies came alive for me when I was covering the world body for The Hindustan Times in the 1980s.

Trying to make sense of the UN acronyms that looked like a jumble of a nursery school kid's alphabet flash cards, brought me back to Dr K. P. Saksena's International Organization class during my MA.

Waiting outside the cold war cauldron of the Security Council during the long sessions of the 1982 Falklands War, flashbacks to the International Law classes of Dr R. P. Anand and Dr V. S. Mani helped make sense of the clauses of the UN Charter and concepts of the laws of war that flew around as unguided verbal missiles.

Several times, the Diplomatic Studies classes of Dean Pushpesh Pant and Dr Satish Kumar set off a medley of bells during press conferences and briefings by diplomats.

Who says liberal arts courses have little relevance to the real world below the ivory towers of academe? The MA Politics-International Studies program at SIS was the best training a journalist could have wanted, but for the lack of reporting and writing courses.

And it is no wonder that of the 20 in the first MA class that graduated from SIS in 1975, at least seven of us are or have been journalists. Among them are Harpal Singh Bedi, sports editor of United News of India who constantly jets off to international assignments; Ela Dutt, who is a senior editor overseeing US political coverage for the New York-based weekly, News-India Times; Jayashree Joshi Eashwar, a columnist for Prevention magazine, and Sujit Dutta, formerly of the Press Trust of India and the UNI. (Vishwa Deepak Tripathi, formerly of the VOA and the BBC, left before graduation when VOA transferred him to Washington.)



The intellectual formation at SIS was so broad and yet rigorous that for a journalist it went beyond the international affairs. Many times I fell back on Dr Urmila Phadnis's South Asia elective while covering Indian politics for India Today in another era. You could say that I could have done these courses at any university (although at that time there hardly that offered an International Studies MA). But it wouldn't have been the same.

The SIS MA wasn't a rote learning, textbook program. The teaching was Socratic and classes were free-ranging excursions of intellectual curiosity fueled by vigorous classroom discussions. The ideological straitjackets didn't constrict and we often thought then that we knew more than the faculty! (The teachers never told us we were stupid, even when we were, because they wanted us to debate, question and hone our intellect.) Everything from newspaper clips and academic journal articles to books by academics and non-academics powered this intellectual adventure. It's these that made the school stay with us as we pounded our journalistic beats or worked our desks.

Causus belli, sure enough, rang a bell during the debates on the justification for war during the run up to Afghanistan and Iraq. The classes I wouldn't call them lectures, because they weren't droning monologues but lively discussions and debates. Dr Mani and Dr Anand were still relevant to making sense of international law on wars and weapons of mass destruction. That was almost 30 years since we were introduced to those ideas when the SIS MA program was started at the school which was still at Ferozeshah Road. It was close to Sapru House, our second home where discussions continued on its lawns over cups of tea from its canteen.

Dr A. Appadorai, the founder of the Indian School of International Studies that became the nucleus of JNU, launched the MA program by teaching the core course in Political Thought that he leavened with his insights into Indian philosophy. It was almost like being in a gurukul as the austere savant in spotless white khadi brought alive the ideas that have shaped our polity.

Leading authorities of the day like Dr M.S. Rajan, a former dean of the school, Dr Ashok Guha, Dr K.P. Misra, Dr Anirudha Gupta and Dr R. Narayanan taught us under the leadership of Dean M.S. Venkataramani, who conceived the MA as an innovative, multi-disciplinary program combining area studies and subject disciplines.

In the third semester the second year the school moved to a dorm abandoned by the National Academy of Administration in what became the JNU academic campus then. Though it lacked the coziness of the Ferozeshah Road campus, the new location brought us into the thick of university life, interacting inside and outside classrooms with students of other schools and participating in co-curricular activities. Some of the JNU hostels built of the signature red bricks in today's campus had already been open 1973 and the orange-striped university buses ran shuttles from there to the Sapru House, via the other libraries.

The first MA class, selected carefully after a national exam and interview, reflected India with an enrolment from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, and Nagaland to Gujarat. (There were also international students from Egypt, the Philippines and Tibet.) Yet ours became a cohesive group of friends bound by fraternal ties that endure 35 years later. Our core group, scattered from New Zealand down-under to Canada at the northern end of globe, stays in touch through a Yahoo group and get-togethers in New Delhi and New York.

The great memories of the school and JNU are tinged by the fascist shadow that passed over us in the last days of our MA program. One of our classmates was plucked from Kaveri Hostel during a night raid and spent days in Tihar jail. Yet in quiet defiance, the school's faculty rallied behind him, ensuring that he was admitted to the M.Phil. program. That's when the SIS intellectual beacon cut through the darkness of fascism that sought to negate all that the school stood for. And the best of it has endured in our memories.

Arul Louis, Knight International Journalism Fellow at The Energy and Resources Institute, Delhi.



REMEMBERING NAVEEN BABU

Yalavarthi Naveen Babu, better known as Naveen, was born in a progressive peasant family in rural Andhra Pradesh. After his B.Sc. from Hyderabad, he joined Meerut University for MA, but moved to JNU in 1985 to rejoin MA Sociology in CSSS, SSS. After MA, he qualified for UGC-JRF and researched under the guidance of Prof. Yogendra Singh in CSSS for his M.Phil dissertation (1989) titled *From Varna to Jati: Transformation from Pastoral to Agrarian Social Formation*, which was recently published as a commemorative book. He discontinued his Ph.D. in the 1990s and grew from student activist to a committed revolutionary of the CPI-ML (People's war), now known as CPI (Maoist), before being killed in 2000.



In his M.Phil dissertation, Naveen Babu traced the history of Indian caste system in the social, cultural and economic aspects of the transformation of *varna* into *jati* from the Rig-Vedic to the 20th century. In the process, he critically reexamined all the major scholars and also synthesized a bold new framework to explain the evolution of the Indian caste system. He particularly challenged Louis Dumont's notion of *Homo hierarchicus* and the four varna theory. He also countered the dominant Western notion that the caste system reflects the static nature of the Indian society, as compared to the more 'evolved' West. From the two *Varnas* (or colours) that existed originally - the white Aryans and the black Dasas or Dasyus, Naveen analytically located their evolution into contemporary Indian *jatīs* in their transition from the then pastoral society into an agrarian society, with accompanying changes in the mode of production, relations of production and the method of surplus extraction. Naveen's work is a modest but significant interdisciplinary contribution to Indian Marxist historiography, sociology and political economy and continues to be valid and relevant till date. His dissertation was a sheer scholarly adventure, as it is extremely rare for an M.Phil student to challenge the best-known scholars and attempt a bold new synthesis.



In his early MA days, Naveen was associated with the SFI, but soon left it. He spent some time reviving "Pragati Sahiti," an organization that popularized progressive Telugu poetry, literature, theatre and culture in Delhi. Later in 1986, he co-founded the 'Students Forum' (along with Samuel Asir Raj and Chelli Hari Kumar), as a watchdog of campus politics in JNU. In 1988, Naveen joined the Delhi Radical Students Organisation (DRSO), founded in 1986 with a Marxist-Leninist ideology.



Naveen's involvement with DRSO throughout the period of its existence had a profound influence on him as well as on the organization. He argued for ideological consistency, uncompromising leadership and organizational discipline and strictly followed it himself. His most memorable moment as a student leader was his hour-long speech standing in hot sun after participating in a 14-day hunger strike in 1989. With his help, DRSO also took up the cause of contractual workers, scavengers and construction workers in the campus to settle their wage disputes and improve their

conditions. Naveen helped us in organising ration cards for construction workers and literacy and healthcare for their children. He was instrumental in affiliating DRSO with the All-India Revolutionary Students Federation (AIRSF), which represented the non-electoral, revolutionary ML movements. Later in the early 1990s, when he discontinued his Ph.D. from JNU to join Delhi University as a law student, he worked with the Democratic Students' Union (DSU), another organization affiliated to the AIRSF. He was later instrumental in the merger of DRSO and DSU into a single entity (DSU) that represents AIRSF throughout Delhi till date. He was also the editor of the AIRSF magazine, "*Kalam*" for sometime.

He was an active campaigner for civil liberties and also worked for People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) for sometime. He often confronted the thorniest issues head on, such as state violence *vs.* revolutionary violence. His experimental civil liberties newspaper "*Democratic Voice*" received wide applause but was discontinued due to lack of resources. Naveen networked DRSO with other students' organizations, trade unions, democratic rights and ethnic movements and campaigned on common issues. Many international scholars remember him fondly for his outstanding contributions during the International Seminar in Delhi on the Nationality Question in Feb 1996 under the All India Peoples Resistance Forum. It brought together William Hinton, Noam Chomsky, Ngugi wa Thiongo and many other international luminaries.

Though he was apparently involved with CPI-ML (Peoples' War) since early 1990s, he withdrew from public life only in the late 1990s. He was apparently working for the magazine "*Jung*" and participated in a raid on a police camp to report from the spot (Darakonda, near Visakhapatnam, AP) on 18th February 2000 and lost his life in the process. Contrary to the dominant portrayals of revolutionaries as inherently violent, deprived, trigger-happy, intimidating, irresponsible or irreparable, Naveen was the exact opposite. No one ever heard him even raise his voice in an argument, let alone quarrel, beat or kill any one or threaten to do so. In fact, some people fondly called him "Gandhi", despite his revolutionary Marxist orientation, because of his personality and lifestyle. He was not trapped or tricked into revolutionary politics. He consciously chose the revolutionary path and willingly gave his life for it.

B. Ramesh Babu, Ph.D. (JNU), Managing Director, Targeted Cancer Therapeutics Inc., Little Rock, AR 72201, USA

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

I joined JNU in 1973 as an MPhil student in Centre for South Asian Studies, SIS. I had done my MA from Kirori Mal College, where I am the principal now. I went to JNU after that and I was allotted room no. 127 in Kaveri Hostel. The same year I became the President of the hostel.

One revolutionary step taken in my time in JNU was the setting up of co-ed hostels. Boys and girls staying in the same building together was not acceptable to many at that time. People had many apprehensions about it. But when the Ganga experiment (of co-ed hostel) succeeded in 1970's, JNU set a unique example in India. The fears of people related to this experiment were proved baseless. The relationship between students and teachers was very friendly. Everybody used to stay on campus. We were all together for 24 hours and the affection we received from our parents unparalleled.

I remember, as the President of a Hostel, my primary concern was to keep the hostel culture tension-free. The atmosphere should be academic and calm. Initially, we needed subsidies and did not have them, later we were able to persuade the Delhi government to grant us subsidies. Also, students agitated for a hostel for married students. Prof. Mahale was the Pro-VC at that time. We gave all sorts of arguments for such a hostel. Finally, we did manage to get it done. One floor in one of the blocks in old campus was converted into a married couples' hostel. This again was a new concept. Only Godavari, Kaveri and Periyar and the library were functional in the new campus. On Sundays we would have breakfast and then go for day-long strolls in the hilly region around JNU where today you have Vasant Kunj. JUN granted you a full life to be lived on your own terms, whichever way you wanted.



Those were very beautiful days. The environment of the campus used to be charged academically, culturally and even politically. Political differences were very sharp between the left and the rest combined (the Free Thinkers) but apart from political ideology, the relationship shared by all the students was that of friendship and mutual tolerance. Despite the political divide, when we all sat down at the dinner table together the barriers vanished.

The cultural foundations of JNU are very strong. The vision of JNU was global from the very beginning. It is all the more relevant today when we are talking more and more in global terms. The culture of JNU is above caste, religion, region and political affiliation and it is worth preserving.

Bhim Sen Singh, Principal, Kirori Mal College



MY DAYS IN JNU

When I reminisce about my days in JNU, both as an alumnus and also as a member of the faculty, a span of over 40 years of the best part of my life, I am overwhelmed by a feeling that my Alma Mater gave me whatever I aspired for.

My entry into JNU was through the Indian School of International Studies (ISIS), which was invited to merge with JNU, in 1971, by its first Vice Chancellor Mr. G. Parthasarathi. ISIS was already a Deemed University of international repute, famous for studies in international relations and area studies in Asia, patterned after the famous Fletcher School of Diplomacy in Boston. I joined the ISIS in 1966 initially as Research Assistant, and, a year later, joined as a Ph.D student, Then, ISIS had only a Ph.D programme, and the annual intake was about 22. Those 22 students were selected by a Selection Committee, composed of the Director and other Heads of Departments, through a six weeks long process of interviews.



Every new student of ISIS was expected to maintain the dignity and image of the School. We were made to realise early that in order to excel in the field we would have to compete with the best brains of the world. ISIS regularly invited world class intellectuals like Hans J. Morgenthau, P.N.S. Mansergh, Morris Jones, Quincey Wright, J.D.B. Miller, and so on, as Visiting Professors, interactions with whom had tremendous impact on students. The ISIS then was like a well-knit family, where everybody knew one another closely. The Sapru House Library provided us with a scholarly environment to pursue our research.



The picturesque environment of JNU always gave me a good feeling. Being the last leg of the Aravali Range, the nature has blessed the JNU campus bountifully. Added to it was a campaign for further greening of the Campus in 1970s by planting bougainvillea and jamun trees all over the campus, which has also changed the face of the JNU campus spectacularly Prof. Monis Raza and Prof. K.J. Mahale gave special attention to this face lifting of JNU. The resultant greenery, and the boulevard surrounding the academic complex of JNU, is comparable to the one which I have seen

around the Academy in Acropolis.

Politically, JNU is a vibrant community. Equally striking is the deep rooted culture of civility in the exchange of views, and contest of ideas. In this context, there are a lot of things to admire, in the student politics of JNU. Barring a few aberrations, their methodology has been totally peaceful. During Students Union elections in JNU no one ventures even to mutilate an election poster of a rival group. I remember the fierce contest between Prakash Karat and Anand Kumar in early 1970s for JNUSU Presidentship but there was no rancour. In 1970s and 1980s public meetings and lectures organised by a particular political group, were attended by all other political groups as well, and transformed such meetings into an arena of peaceful competition between ideas. That is the magnetism of the JNU campus.

JNU has evolved a distinct methodology for resolving contentious issues. I remember the first gherao in JNU in the early 1970s when the then VC, Mr G. Parthsarathi, was gheraoed in his office by students. The VC's chamber was not provided with an attached toilet, which was located at the other end of the corridor. I drew the Union President V.C. Koshy's attention to this ticklish scenario and he saw to it that the Vice Chancellor was not inconvenienced nor embarrassed in any way personally, and also that food and refreshments for him were allowed in when needed. Although GP, being a close confidante of PM Indira Gandhi, who was also the Chancellor of JNU, had all the state power at his command, he refused to call the police into the campus. Instead, he allowed senior faculty members to discuss the issues with the Students Union leadership. The issues raised by students were resolved satisfactorily and the gherao was lifted at 1.50 a.m. That night, the JNU community was laying the foundation of a new ethos for peacefully resolving contentious issues in JNU through negotiations.

The distinct culture of the JNU student community gets manifest when they do protest against public authorities. JNU students are averse to the destruction of public properties when they register their protest. I remember several occasions in which JNU students had disrupted the DTC bus services through Ber Sarai, near the JNU Old Campus, in protest, and detained a large number of DTC buses inside the old campus for hours together, without causing even a scratch on them. It is important that as a community, we preserve our high standard of behaviour, so that, the very mention of the term 'JNU alumni' evokes instant respect everywhere in the country.

I also remember how the JNU community rose like one person for sending succour to the victims of tornado in Andhra Pradesh in early 1980s and went round the whole of Delhi, with bowls in hand for collecting donations and clothes from major market places. Indeed, through such innumerable spontaneous humanitarian activities the JNU has produced, and still produces, a cream of socially conscious educated young men who occupy high positions in different walks of life-academic, administrative, scientific, socio-political and media in India and abroad.

JNU played an important role in the JP movement for total revolution in the early 1970s. During the movement Jayaprakash Narayan visited JNU and addressed a mammoth rally in the (old) campus. When JP passed away in 1979, as a mark of respect to him and to perpetuate his memory, the JNU community established the Jayaprakash Foundation. I had the privilege of remaining its President for 24 years. Innumerable eminent personalities from India and abroad have delivered JP Memorial lectures in JNU, since 1980.

I received my Ph.D Degree from JNU in 1972 at the first convocation held for JNU students, in which Mr Balraj Sahni, the famous film personality was the chief guest. The annual convocation was discontinued after that on an argument that the money spent for could be utilised for providing assistance to needy students. Whatever the validity of the argument put forth in 1973 against holding annual convocations in JNU, today there is a strong and widespread feeling among the students and teachers in JNU that the degrees should be formally handed over to students annually at a convocation held for that purpose. Students should receive their Degrees with due honour in a ceremony.

I can go on reminiscing my days in JNU. I left JNU with a sense of satisfaction and pride. In academic terms, I have left



my imprints in JNU. In physical terms too, I have left my footprints on the JNU campus. The tall peepal tree in front of the Cafeteria of the Students Activities Centre, planted and nurtured jointly by me and my daughter Jayashree, a JNU alumna herself, many years ago, is a standing monument of my days in the JNU.

B. Vivekanandan

ACADEMIC PURSUIT AND REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVISM

It was some time in May 1979 that I came first to JNU. I was then passing out from School of Planning & Architecture (SPA), New Delhi with a post-graduate degree in Urban & Regional Planning. I was also the President of All India Nepalese Students Association (AINSA). I was looking for a suitable place where I could pursue both my passions for knowledge and revolutionary activism. It was just then that a strange coincidence of necessity and chance took place in my life. I was introduced to Prof. Moonis Raza of JNU by my Principal Prof. Bijit Ghosh (both of whom are unfortunately dead now!) as a 'brilliant student and a revolutionary activist' at a public function in SPA. Prof. Raza instantly invited me to join JNU and offered me a scholarship from Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR). I did not fail to grab the opportunity and thus joined JNU as an M.Phil./Ph.D. student in August 1979. I remained in JNU till the end of 1985.



I have no words to describe the contribution of JNU in my life. I passed the best years of my life in JNU. This reputed University provided the best environment for both academic pursuit and revolutionary activism, which I was earnestly looking for. The real foundation of my academic and political life was laid on the rocks of the JNU campus. I owe much to JNU for what I am today.



I have many fond memories of JNU days. I specially remember the frequent political debates and revolutionary slogan-shouting in the campus. The late hour political talks sitting around Ganga Dhaba used to be quite popular among the students. Also my long hours within the excellent newly constructed library can never fade away from my memory. I also fondly remember the affection I used to get from my teachers in the Centre for the Study of Regional Development (CSR), specially my supervisor Dr. (Mrs.) Atiya Habib Kidwai.



JNU is one of the best universities in the world. Everybody feels proud to be associated with this Centre of excellence. Let JNU maintain its world class standard. I specially admire its progressive culture and political tolerance. The fusion of academic soundness and political/social activism is perhaps the unique hallmark of JNU. I wish the JNU community will maintain this excellent tradition.

Baburam Bhattarai, Finance Minister, Nepal

MY DAYS IN JNU

I joined the Centre of German Studies, School of Languages, in 1976 and left JNU in 1982. I was so much fascinated by JNU that even after 1982 I would find some excuse and visit Delhi and stay awhile in JNU. JNU of our times was like a family. Almost everyone knew every other person by name, discipline etc. All divisions were done away with. There was real living together on equal terms. The seniors, the juniors, the students, the teachers, the karamcharis were one and cared for one another. Such a constructive and healthy atmosphere one can not come across any where in the world.

JNU is a culture and we boast of belonging to this culture. Here are some glimpses of this culture:

1. JNU would come to life after 9.PM in various halls. Lectures, election meetings etc would be organized only at this time.
2. Guests coming to visit or stay would be entertained as guests of the fraternity. I have at times known about my visitors at the time of their departure, after they had stayed a couple of days with a friend on campus.
3. JNU Culture lives everywhere in all parts of the world. The moment you come across a JNUite a very strong bond is aroused in you and you feel very close to the person.
4. JNU is a place which taught you to give away your worries, live in the present and thus shape your future.
5. JNU taught us the real philosophy of life, to live not only for yourself, but for others, to care for the poor, deprived, have-nots and the weak and give them a helping hand.

JNU AT PRESENT

JNU of our times was not apolitical, but everyone respected the opinion of the other. There was a space and respect for varied opinions and shades and that is what made JNU most beautiful. I hear JNU is now coloured in a different shade and the space which was available to us is no more available there.

Bashir Ahmad, Director, Institute of Foreign Languages, University of Kashmir

MY YEARS AT JNU

When I entered into JNU campus as PG student in 1986, it was the second revolutionary change in my life. After completing 11 + 2 from my village school and district college (Giridih, Jharkhand), I joined Delhi University as a student of BA Eco (Hons.). It was my first exposure to a metropolitan city and cosmopolitan culture. The journey from native culture to cosmopolitan culture has changed my life perspective. Due to poor English, shyness and lack of articulation, I was often referred to as 'Bhaiyaji' by my fellow students. This type of ostracization and typical elite approach of my Delhiite friends gave me enough strength to 'study and struggle.'

In the year 1986, I joined the Centre for the Study of Social System, JNU. It brought the second revolutionary change in my life, which has a lingering effect even today. Here, I realized the perfect blending of local and cosmopolitan culture, where each culture has a sense of pride and respect for the other. Coming to JNU was like 'coming to my dream land.' This campus has not only free thinking, free perspectives and ideas, but also has enough space for interaction and debate, where people are allowed to 'agree to disagree' to start with. Each idea is not only honored, but here is good blending of individualism and collectivity as well. It is here I could realize the value of human dignity, which has helped me to develop a relativistic approach in life. Although, I had been introduced to Marxism at BA-III year level by my teacher Prof. Y.P.Chibbar (a legend in the field of Human Rights and General Secretary of PUCL), I could realize theory with praxis in JNU only. Students of JNU are not only concerned with ideas and their career, but they are equally engaged with activism and are sensitive towards National and International issues. I had occasions to witness and participate in mass movements and mass activism. It was 1989 when 'Mandal Commission' was in the process of implementation. The entire country was in turmoil, so was JNU campus. As President of Jhelum Hostel, it was my collective and individual privilege to participate in the struggle. Here for the first time I could witness and realize the 'People's Power'. There were many mass agitations and struggles during my student days agitations against the Tiananmen Square Massacre, against the demolition of Babri Mosque, in support of Tibet Liberation Struggle, etc,



were some of the significant ones. All these struggles taught me the lesson that ideas without activism is a hollow concept.

After M.A., I joined M. Phil. and completed Ph.D. as well in the same department. When I look back, I find those 9 years in JNU campus as 'the golden period' of my life. My teachers not only introduced me to the interdisciplinary approach of research, but also very meticulously laid the foundation of my academic career. I owe a lot to my teachers and pay my heartfelt sincere regards to all of them. I am also indebted to JNU campus (Jhelum Lawn, Ganga Dhaba, Library, after Dinner Talks, etc, for healthy group discussions), fellow students and friends who socialized me to inculcate humanitarianism, relativism and holism in my life. It is JNU which has transformed me from 'Biological unit to Social Being' in true sense.



Long Live JNU, Long Live JNU Culture and Tradition

B.N. Prasad, Senior Fellow, Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow

JNU OUR SWEET HOME

I am very proud of JNU; wherever I have been over the world, most of the people welcome me with respect. I am sure that without JNU degree and FSA activities, it should not be easy for me to have a good chance to travel around the world.



FSA activities served as a cultural bridge between the National and International groups of students, which helped Indian and foreign students with different viewpoints to understand each other, and make adjustments wherever possible. We worked together, helped each other, travelled, and arranged International Cultural festivals celebrating the planetary diversity in food, dances, and songs.

I very much enjoyed and appreciated them all: teachers, officers, shopkeepers and students in JNU campus are very close to each other as a big and warm family. I do remember that in case of any problem, Prof. Sushama Jain, Foreign Students' Advisor or Dean of Students or Vice-Chancellor would come immediately for helping us even during night time.

On behalf of ex-students, I like to give many thanks, warm regards and best wishes to all of JNU teachers, officers, students and ICCR for helping and supporting us during our stay at JNU.

We have very good memories and will help as much as we can. Just let us know.

'WE WILL COME TOGETHER FOR EVER'.

I wish JNU and FSA go ahead and have a successful future.

Chaveewan Charoensap (Mekaroonkamol), ex-president of the Foreign Students' Association, 2001-2002



FROM SAPRU HOUSE TO GODAVARI

On a cold winter day when I arrived in New Delhi in 1967, Jawaharlal Nehru University was still an idea and not a reality. I had come from Chennai where I was working as an English tutor in a boys' college, after taking leave of my parents in Bangalore, to join the Indian School of International Studies. Professor M S Venkataramani, the head of the Department of American Studies, had chosen me to be his student. I was 22 and my local guardian was my maternal uncle. He was an engineer by profession but also thought of himself as an expert tailor. He proceeded to stitch me a coat for winter which he stitched slightly bigger thinking it will fit me fine even if I grew taller or bigger. At 22 I had no hopes of growing taller and so, armed with a coat which was one size bigger and a sweater dyed in black because my mother had knitted it in two different kinds of green (the same green colour went out of market just when my mother reached the top part of the sweater) I came to Sapru House hostel ready to weather any kind of storm in terms of weather or research.

In 1971, I went to the U S and came back after six months of field work. I will not go into that story here for that has to be written as a serial. Suffice it to say that I took the same coat with me and the lining in one of the sleeves had given way and that that led to some interesting incidents. When I had gone for the field trip Indian School of International Studies was already a part of the Jawaharlal Nehru University but those of us in Sapru House did not quite feel a part of it for we had not shifted to what was called the new campus then. This happened later when all of us went to Godavari hostel with large rooms with balconies overlooking a vast expanse of rocks. Being in a large campus was an exhilarating experience and also heady. We missed Connaught Circus and the Nair mess where we went to eat during Onam and other festivals. But we did not mind it for there was the vast campus to walk around and there was a tiny Madras Hotel in Munirka when we longed for idlis. The "new campus" gave us an anonymity which Sapru House had lacked. And all of a sudden we were all drawn into forming the SFI with Prakash Karat as a moving force. Prakash was in the School of International Studies and he was in the South Asian Studies Department but we never saw him in the library ever. He spent all his time raising what he called "our political consciousness". I must say he succeeded to a great extent. It felt good to be part of a great fervour of activity although we had several differences among ourselves. Appan Menon was in my department and a group of us spent a great deal of time together discussing various things when Appan was not charming his way through the hearts of many girls.

In the Godavari Hostel itself a group of us (Gulshan, Geeta Gowri, Lalima Verma, Vasanthi Damle, Jayashree Deshpande and a few others) were good friends and we were quite thorough about who was having a relationship with whom and which would work and which wouldn't. Of course we had relationships of our own but thought the others did not know about it. We also spoke of our research at times and shared many stories about legends like Professor Ashok Guha and Professor M S Venkataramani. Although I left the hostel later I continued to be a part of JNU for I did a diploma in Spanish and Portuguese. And during the chilling years of Emergency I was very much in the campus. That was the first time the campus canteen went silent and even I who found it difficult to speak softly (there is a herb called *gorojanai* which Tamil children are fed to make their voice strong and the rumour is that my mother gave me an overdose) became silent those days. And the silence in the campus itself was eerie to say the least.

It was not in good taste those days to ask anyone how her or his thesis was going. Some continued to be in their first chapter after several years. I did complete my dissertation and get my degree but what I did afterwards had a lot to do with JNU but not American Studies.

C S Lakshmi (Ambai), Tamil writer and activist research scholar

THE JNU SPIRIT

I came to JNU in 1977 for M Phil in East Asian Studies at the School of International Studies. A lot of teachers and students were known to us earlier. JNU was inspiring and gave orientation to my thoughts and ideas.

I established Student's for Democratic Socialism (SDS) and defeated the communists on the campus in students'



elections. One incident is etched in my memory. I don't remember the year exactly at the moment but K R Narayanan was our Vice Chancellor at that time. There was some issue on which students *gheraoed* Mr. Narayanan. I, with many others was inside his room when a telephone call came for him. It was Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister at that time. She told him that I warned you earlier also that JNU students are difficult and now that they have *gheraoed* you, I have instructed Jagmohan to send police force to rescue you. Mr. Jagmohan was Lt. Governor of Delhi at that time. Mr. Narayanan told Mrs. Gandhi that its fine that she cares for him but it is his family matter. JNU is his family and he will sort it out. When she insisted he told her that please don't send the police force and even if the force arrives, it will enter the campus over his dead body. It was something really moving for everyone. Later the issue was resolved within a few hours.



Another lasting memory I have is of one of the Academic Council meetings. Those days' students used to be part of Academic Council. I spoke for about 45 minutes. At the end Prof. Moonis Raza stood up and told, "*Ama yaar, tum yahan kya kar tahe ho? Tumhari jagah to Parliament mein hai.*" When I first became Member of Parliament and Minister, I remembered his words and he went with me to my public felicitation.

I also cherish the impact of friends and other people who have been always helpful in providing all kind of support to others. I was quite active in politics in JNU and there is a large number of people who have supported me. I want to mention that I am in politics because of two persons, Anand Kumar and Ramesh Dikshit. They both have had a great contribution in my being here in politics.



I give JNU credit for everything I have achieved today. Had I not been to JNU I have not been where I am today. I may have been doing something else, don't know what, but certainly not what I am doing today. The idealism, the attitude for life and the thought process to change, which JNU gives, is something no other place could give.

I am not much in touch with JNU politics now but I believe JNU and its politics are still the best as always. It's the only place where student take care of the whole process of elections by themselves. That's appreciable. JNU is the only where a girl can walk alone from one end to the other at 3.00 in the morning all by herself. That's not possible anywhere and it is possible in JNU because of its politics.

JNU still thinks; students get restless here on issues ranging from local to global shows that it has retained its basic nature. This is irrespective of party or ideological affiliations of the students. The value system is still intact here in the students, I believe.



Universities are the places of political socialization all over but JNU has never been a nursery in sense of the term. It has not produced leaders or

politicians except a few. But yes, JNU has been the place which has instilled political awareness and sensitivity in the students. It socializes you better than anything.

I believe people see us with a difference because JNU makes you behave differently, with a difference than others. I wish that the ideas, the battle of thoughts should continue here. I wish wherever our people are, they should keep their commitment to what JNU teaches us the values, the ideals and the JNU spirit.

Digvijay Singh, Former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (JD-S)

विश्वविद्यालय की राजनीतिक संस्कृति

पिछले बीस-पच्चीस वर्षों से जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय को लोग बुद्धिजीवियों के एक ऐसे प्रमुख केन्द्र रूप में जानते हैं, जहाँ जनवादी और लोकतांत्रिक किस्म का माहौल है। और यह सच भी है कि देश के अन्य विश्वविद्यालयों से अनेक बातों में जे.एन.यू. की संस्कृति ओर परम्पराएँ कुछ भिन्न दिखाई देती हैं। स्वाधीन भारत के प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू ने देश की बदलती हुई सामाजिक-राजनीतिक जरूरतों के मुताबिक एक आधुनिक किस्म के ऐसे विश्वविद्यालय की कल्पना की थी जो चिंतन की पुरानी परिपाटियों से हटकर देश ओर समाज के लिए नये दृष्टिकोण पैदा कर सके। इस प्रकार विश्वविद्यालय की मूल कल्पना और ढांचे में ही कुछ उदार किस्म के लोकतांत्रिक मूल्य निहित थे, जिनका असर विश्वविद्यालय की सांस्कृतिक परम्पराओं में देखा जा सकता है। परिसर में विशेष प्रकार की स्वतन्त्रता है, लेकिन वह कभी अराजकता की सीमा को नहीं छूती है। इस स्वतन्त्रता के साथ कुछ जिम्मेदारियों का आभास भी लगा रहता है और कुछ सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों का दबाव बना रहता है। परिसर के इस स्वस्थ खुलेपन ओर लोकतांत्रिक माहौल के पीछे इस विश्वविद्यालय की कुछ विशिष्ट सांस्कृतिक-राजनीतिक परम्पराएँ हैं। विश्वविद्यालय की प्रत्येक गतिविधियों में छात्रों की सहभागिता और छात्रों की राजनीतिक संवेदनशीलता ये दो बातें तो विश्वविद्यालय की समपूर्ण संसृति का जैसे मूलमंत्र बन गई हैं। छात्रों की अहमियत को समझना, उनकी स्वयं की भागीदारी के माध्यम से उन्हें जिम्मेदारियों का अहसास कराना, विवेक-सम्मत निर्णय लेने में सहयोग करना आदि ऐसी बातें हैं, जो यहाँ की संसृति के लोकतांत्रिक के लोकतांत्रिक मिजाज का परिचय देती हैं। विश्वविद्यालय की स्थापना के बाद से ही छात्रों की सहभागिता को गम्भीरता से लिया गया। विश्वविद्यालय की उच्च स्तरीय इकाई विद्वत परिषद् (ऐकेडमिक कौन्सिल) तक में एक समय तक छात्र समुदाय का उचित प्रतिनिधित्व रखा गया था। आपातकाल के बाद तक ऐसी व्यवस्था थी। इस सिलसिले में स्टूडेंट फेकल्टी कमेटी को याद करना जरूरी है, जो एस.एफ.सी. के नाम से जानी जाती थी, छात्र समुदाय के हित के लिए यह कमेटी प्रत्येक गतिविधियों के संचालन में अपनी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका रखती थी। विश्वविद्यालय में प्रवेश सम्बन्धी छात्रों की समस्या हो या उनकी परीक्षा के मूल्यांकन सम्बन्धी कोई अड़चन एस.एफ.सी. के छात्र प्रतिनिधि अपनी सूझबूझ और लगन का तत्काल परिचय देते थे। यह कमेटी सन् 1983 के बाद समाप्त कर दी गई।

विश्वविद्यालय में छात्र-समुदाय की सहभागिता का सर्वोत्तम उदाहरण यहाँ की छात्र-राजनीति है, जिसकी शैली ही कैम्पस की राजनीतिक संस्कृति बन गई है। छात्र-राजनीति की मिसाल अपने आप में पूर्ण और उत्तरदायित्वों से भरी हुई है। यानी छात्रों की राजनीति में छात्रों के सिवा किसी का दखल नहीं। यहाँ के छात्रसंघ का संविधान भी यहीं के छात्र-संगठनों का बनाया हुआ है। राजनीतिक शक्तियों के बँटवारे में लोकतांत्रिक रवैये का पूरा ध्यान रखते हुए छात्रों के सम्पूर्ण प्रतिनिधित्व पर यह संविधान विशेष जोर देता है। छात्रसंघ के सालाना चुनाव सम्पन्न करवाने की जिम्मेदारी तो आरम्भ से ही छात्रों के हाथ में ही रही है। इसके लिए चुनाव आयोग का गठन भी स्वयं छात्र ही करते हैं। चुनाव सम्बन्धी आचार-संहिता से जुड़े सारे वैधानिक और प्रशासनिक अधिकार इस आयोग के पास सुरक्षित रहते हैं, जिनका उपयोग वह छात्र राजनीति के हित में समय-समय पर करता है। विश्वविद्यालय में अभी सन् 1994 के छात्रसंघ के चुनाव में अपने भाषण के दौरान सार्वजनिक सभा



में आपत्तिजनक शब्दों का प्रयोग करने के कारण चुनाव आयोग ने अपनी शक्तियों का प्रयोग करते हुए अध्यक्ष पद के दो उम्मीदवारों तथा पार्श्व पद के अन्य उम्मीदवारों को चुनाव मैदान से ही बाहर कर दिया था। यह अधिकार और नैतिक बल उसी राजनीतिक संस्कृति से अर्जित किया गया है, जिसे सम्पूर्ण जे. एन.यू. समुदाय ने निर्मित किया था।

यह एक आदर्श मिसाल से कम नहीं है कि जिस समाज में मनी पॉवर के बिना ग्राम-पंचायतों तक के चुनाव ठीक से सम्पन्न नहीं होते, वहीं राजधानी में स्थित इस विश्वविद्यालय में छात्रसंघ के चुनाव में पैसे की भूमिका अभी तक नगण्य बनी हुई है। चुनाव के दौरान सदा से ही एक अनोखी किस्म की सादगी कैम्पस में दिखाई देती है। चुनाव प्रचार के लिए जीप या अन्य मोटरगाड़ियाँ, कपड़े के रंगीन बैनर, प्रेस से छपे हुए पोस्टर, लाऊडस्पीकर का प्रयोग आदि ऐसी चीजें हैं, जो अन्य विश्वविद्यालयों में चुनाव के प्रसंग में आम हो गई है, लेकिन जे.एन. यू. कैम्पस के लिए ये अभी असम्भव-सी बनी हुई है। फिजूलखर्च से बचने की यह मिसाल अन्य किसी भी चुनाव प्रणाली के लिए आदर्श नहीं तो प्रेरणादायी अवश्य बन सकती है। कैम्पस की राजनीति के लिए राष्ट्रीय स्तर के राजनीतिक दलों का हस्तक्षेप भी यहाँ के छात्रों को मान्य नहीं है। चुनाव खर्च के लिए छात्र संगठनों के लोग छात्र-समुदाय में ही चन्दा इकट्ठा करते हैं। यह केवल मितव्ययिता की बात नहीं है, बल्कि यह यहाँ की छात्र राजनीति ने अपने अनुभवों से अपनी आवश्यकताओं और सीमाओं को ठीक से पहचान लिया है इस गौरवशाली परम्परा का श्रेय मुख्य रूप से उन प्रगतिशील-जनवादी छात्र-संगठनों को जाता है, जिन्होंने विश्वविद्यालय के आरम्भिक काल में इस तरह का राजीतिक वातावरण पैदा किया।

विश्वविद्यालय की छात्र-राजनीति में पोस्टर की संस्कृति इस कैम्पस की विशिष्ट बातों में एक है। चुनाव प्रचार हो अथवा अन्य मसला, किसी विचार का विरोध करना हो या समर्थन, हॉस्टल की समस्या हो या अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर की पेचीदा समस्या-हाथ से बनाया हुआ पोस्टर यहाँ जन-संचार का मुख्य माध्यम बन जाता है। प्रेस से छपे हुए पोस्टर की जगह विविध रंगों वाले हाथ की सुन्दर लिखावट से युक्त तरह-तरह के पोस्टर मेस, सार्वजनिक कैन्टीन अथवा बस-स्टॉप पर बरबस आपका ध्यान खींच लेंगे। ऐसे में मितव्ययिता तो बनी ही रहती है, बल्कि प्रेस की एकरसता भी टूटती है। इन पोस्टरों का अन्य आकर्षण है उनकी सामग्री की विविधता। वोट के लिए अमुक उम्मीदवार को विजयी बनावें जैसी भौंडी अपील न तो इस प्रकार के पोस्टरों में ही होती है और न ही यहाँ के छात्र उससे प्रभावित होते हैं। ये पोस्टर अत्यन्त बौद्धिक, कलात्मक ओर कभी-कभी काव्यात्मक और दर्शनीय सामग्री के साथ दिखाई देते हैं। हीगल की कोई दार्शनिक उक्ति से लेकर किसी ठेठ भोजपुरी जनकवि की पंक्तियाँ तक इन पोस्टरों की सामग्री हुआ करती है। सुन्दर और कलात्मक

पोस्टर बनाने वाले छात्रों की हर छात्र संगठन में एक अलग पहचान हुआ करती थी और इस कार्य के लिए उनका व्यक्तिगत योगदान अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण समझा जाता था। यह तो निश्चित है कि पहले जितने कलात्मक और विविधतापूर्ण पोस्टर आजकल कम दिखाई देते हैं, लेकिन पोस्टर सम्बन्धी अलिखित आचार-संहिता अभी भी कैम्पस में कायम है। यानी कि पोस्टर को फाड़ना, अथवा एक पोस्टर पर दूसरा पोस्टर चिपका देना.... आदि को अनैतिक और शर्मनाक माना गया है और इस प्रकार की मर्यादा अभी तक कायम है। वैचारिक मतभेद के बावजूद अपनी बात को तर्क के साथ कहना, सहिष्णुता के साथ दूसरों की बातें सुनना, अन्य तौर-तरीकों के बजाय वैचारिक और बौद्धिक शक्तियों को काम में लाना-आदि बातें अभी भी कैम्पस की राजनीतिक संस्कृति का मूल्य बनी हुई हैं। छात्रसंघ के चुनाव में धनशक्ति की तरह हिंसा या गुंडागर्दी भी यहाँ काम नहीं करती। प्रत्येक उम्मीदवार को चुनाव से पहले विश्वविद्यालय की सार्वजनिक सभा में वैचारिक और बौद्धिक कसौटी पर खरा उतरना पड़ता है। इस कवायद में उसे अपनी राजनीतिक परिपक्वता का तो परिचय देना ही पड़ता है, साथ ही साथ उसे स्थानीय परिसर से लेकर राष्ट्रीय-अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर की समस्याओं पर पूछे गए सवालों का जवाब भी देना पड़ता है। राजधानी में ही स्थित दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय के छात्रसंघ के चुनावों में पिछले वर्ष ही एक छात्र संगठन (अखिल भारतीय विद्यार्थी परिषद्) की जीप में किसी त्यागी नामक कुख्यात अपराधी का पुलिस मुठभेड़ में मारा जाना एक ऐसी घटना है, जिसका जे.एन.यू. में घट जाना कल्पनातीत है। यह एक रिकार्ड की बात है कि विश्वविद्यालय के छात्रसंघ के चुनाव के दौरान आज तक हिंसा या गुंडागर्दी की बात तो दूर-किसी भी प्रकार की अप्रिय घटना आज तक देखने में नहीं आई। यही कारण है कि चुनाव में अभी तक पुलिस व्यवस्था की आवश्यकता महसूस ही नहीं की गई।

छात्रों की राजनीतिक संसति का असर विश्वविद्यालय में प्रवेश लेने वाले नये छात्रों के मामलों में भी देखा जा सकता है। सत्र के शुरू में अन्य विश्वविद्यालयों और शिक्षा संस्थानों में नये छात्रों की रैंगिंग से जुड़ी कुछ अटपटी खबरें सुनने को मिलती हैं। इस मामले में जे.एन.यू. कैम्पस एक तरह का अपवाद ही है, जहाँ वरिष्ठ छात्र द्वारा नये छात्रों का स्वागत करने और उनमें आत्मविश्वास भरने की सुदीर्घ परम्परा है। यह कार्यक्रम फ़ेसर्स वैलकम के नाम से जाना जाता रहा है। विश्वविद्यालय के पुराने दिनों में नवागन्तुक छात्रों में एस.एफ.आई. और ए.आई.एस.एफ. जैसे छात्र-संगठन गहरी दिलचस्पी के साथ राजनीतिक सम्भावनाएं खोजते थे। नये छात्रों की व्यक्तिगत योग्यता को रेखांकित करने की यह परम्परा आजकल कुछ शिथिल पड़ती जा रही है। ऐसा नहीं था कि नये छात्र को केवल 'वोटर' की निगाह से देखकर उसका राजनीतिकरण किया जाता था, बल्कि छात्र की सामाजिक पृष्ठभूमि के प्रति ये संगठन अत्यन्त संवेदनशील थे, और व्यक्तिगत समस्या को समझने में मानवीय दृष्टिकोण को भी ध्यान में रखते थे। नये छात्रों की बात को और सवाल को ध्यान से सुना जाता था उसे तर्क करने, प्रश्न पूछने, विश्लेषण करने और विवेक-सम्मत निर्णय लेने में उदार किस्म की मौलिक छूट दी जाती थी। विश्वविद्यालय में इस प्रकार 'की भागीदारी का अहसास कराना, वैचारिक और बौद्धिक क्षमता के विकास के रास्ते खोलना, अपने इतिहास और समाज की गति को ठीक से समझने के औजार प्रदान करना और किसी राजनीतिक दर्शन या विचारधारा को आत्मसात करने की प्रक्रिया पैदा करना आदि बातें नये छात्रों के व्यक्तित्व के रूपान्तरण के लिए काफी होती थी। इस प्रकार के व्यक्तिगत स्तर पर सांझेदारी और उपस्थिति की भावना वर्तमान समय में कम अवश्य दिखाई देती है लेकिन अन्य विश्वविद्यालयों की तुलना में नये छात्र स्वयं को जे.एन.यू. कैम्पस में मुक्त और तनावरहित अब भी महसूस करते हैं।

द्वारिका प्रसाद वर्मा

A DIFFERENT PLACE

In year 2000, I joined SLS, JNU for M. Phil/Ph.D program. JNU has contributed immensely to my academic pursuits. When I came here, I found it absolutely different from the educational institutions I had attended earlier. As far as the campus culture and academic environment are concerned, Delhi University and JNU are poles apart despite being in the same city. I love the JNU Campus. Besides the campus, the student-faculty interaction is of a different nature here.



One can learn so much more in an open environment. The students-teacher ratio also contributes to the openness. Another remarkable thing about JNU is that it gives ample opportunity to its students to grow as individuals, to develop their own opinions, intellectual space and also bright careers. While doing my Ph.D, I was a member of the student-faculty committee and also was the SLS convener, JNUSU, for three consecutive years. I believe these extra-curricular activities are excellent opportunities to learn and grow as a responsible student and a citizen.



Also, JNU ensures that high quality higher education is, within every one's reach. If you compare the fees that we pay in JNU to that of other university, you would find that we are getting a Ph.D degree almost free of cost! In all these ways, I can say that it was a boon for me to join JNU. I would like to say that whatever I have achieved, I own it all to JNU any my mentor Prof. B. N. Mallik.

JNU provides amazing infrastructure and academic ambience. This University spends lakhs of rupees on its students without asking them to pay as much. This University is a boon for the students. But it brings with it a lot of responsibility too because it is ultimately the tax payers money on which we get to study. Hence, we've got to pay back to the society in our own respective way. JNU teaches us all this and that is why, it is a great institution. Also, when you go abroad you find that the basic foundation of your knowledge laid by JNU is very strong. So in that sense also, we are doing a great job.

Dinesh Pal

MY JNU EXPERIENCES

I live with JNU daily, particularly with the School of International Studies in my personal life and in my professional life - even after some 3 decades. We were the first Masters class at the School of International Studies, when the building was not even inside the JNU campus!

My experiences there shaped me. If it was not for the high quality teaching International Relations, International Law and Organization, the ethics of good research, verification of facts, the lack of dogmatic ideologies, openness to ideas, skepticism toward authority combined with respect for ideas and individuals that was pervasive in SIS, I would not be striving to be a good journalist to this day. That openness to differing points of view and recognizing the right to hold different points of view that is what SIS brought to JNU.

So even when some of us in SIS had political affiliations, we were open to other ideas. I believe that is a plus and forms the underpinnings of a great democracy.

I loved the political energy of JNU, the engagement of students with the issues of their country. It influenced me profoundly so that no matter where



I am I remain engaged and moved by the issues of the day not just in the country I am in, but also in the wider world.

Ela Dutt, Journalist, Canada

MY ASSOCIATION WITH JNU

It was one of those finer coincidences of life that catapulted me to the 'Down Campus' on a hot summer afternoon in 1979. The memory of the campus and more so of that written examination, being invigilated by Ms. Shirin Rutnagar on a sultry sun-baked afternoon, is that of awe and to some extent even surreal. I had decided to shift over from DU on account of difficulty in finding hostel accommodation my admission in K.M. College had no guarantee for hostel and the wait was getting unbearable for me. Having heard that hostel accommodation is available in JNU for a song it was but a natural attempt on my part to try my luck there. Further in the quest of a single room I opted to go to Poorvanchal, which was then considered far away from 'civilisation'. Later I returned to 'civilisation' by shifting to Sutlej hostel and became part of the 'main stream'. Though it is to Poorvanchal that I owe some of my best friends acquired during JNU days, including two who are no more in this world, Amitabh Bhattacharya and Mohun Kudesia but whose endearing and fond memories will always be fresh in my heart and mind.

My association in JNU can be flagged in three major groups hostel folks, department guys, and the campus community at large. Typically interactions at all these levels had their own distinct charm.

My department of history was then headed by Prof. S. Bhattacharya, an erudite scholar. The other luminaries included Prof. Bipin Chandra, Prof. Satish Chandra, later my guide for M.Phil, Prof. S. Gopal, Prof. Romilla Thapar, Prof. Harbans Mukhiya, Prof. Muzaffar Alam, Prof. Dilbagh Singh, Dr. K.K. Trivedi, just to name a few. This galaxy was awe-inspiring. Of course we had occasions to hear and meet renowned teachers from other disciplines as well who were also gems of their expert areas. This was a great exposure for all of us. Their teachings expanded our horizon and gave us a newer world view hitherto unexplored. I can say with confidence that JNU those days provided us with the most healthy and lively academic atmosphere in the country.

Hostel life was indeed an endless fun. Morning brawls in the toilet to the affairs of the Mess, common room, the posters that appeared from no where in the morning, all threw up innumerable possibilities for tomfoolery and merriment. We enjoyed gossip, even malicious at times and without any qualms. They added spice to the hostel life. I also did a stint as Mess Secretary and my efforts to give better non-veg brought from Essex Farm or INA market was appreciated. We were able to tide over crisis time also when the workers resorted to strikes it was lot of fun cooking the food at such times, though we resented washing the utensils. Music sessions, group studies for the civil services and booze parties were always happening. There were not many rooms in the campus without regular 'guests' one of the reasons for high mess bills. You could hardly find a more enjoyable hostel life anywhere in this world. There could be no loners those days.

The community life in JNU was the best thing to happen to any youth. Who can forget Jhelum lawns, Ganga dhaba and Godavari dhaba? The all night affairs belonged to these locations that gave the campus many glamorous tags and also generated lot of envy in DU colleges. It is also correct that many a romance took shape here and fructified into life-long relationships. They were at the same time places for great intellectual debates where Marx, Engel and Hegel were discussed as much as Gandhism or Nehruvian model of socialistic society. It is not surprising that many senior politicians, academics, journalists, bureaucrats and activists are to be found today at the national level who rubbed shoulders with us on the campus during the roaring 80s.

Young people are radical everywhere and so were we those days. It was politically more correct to be either left or at least left of centre. We generally aligned with depressed groups, with socially progressive issues and shouted slogans against imperialism. These gave a purpose to our life and vent to our youthful energies. Participation by girl students in movements and rallies in large numbers under the banner of JNUSU, unlike at many other universities, was another



important feature that added colour to our activities. Late night public meetings, visits by stalwarts like Karat, Yechury, Anand, Tripathy and others and Presidential debates are all etched in our memories. Not many educational institutions can boast of such colourful election process.

Some poignant memories:

Death of a most dear friend Razmi in an accident on 1.1.1982; the JNU bus carrying more than 50 students went to his home town Aligarh for his cremation, I have the photographs

SUTFEST 83, I being one of the leading organisers of that event, I have the group photograph

Formation of a stormy DSF, a break-up group of SFI students who got disillusioned with the doctrinaire policies of mainstream politics

Arrival of noisy Rajan G James on the political firmament of JNU

Students' agitation leading to the *gherao* of VC Shrivastava

Police action in May 1983 leading to our landing up in Tihar and then *the great escape*

... and many others.

Some of my best friends and who have sustained as such are from the campus.

Long live JNU!

Long live JNUSU!

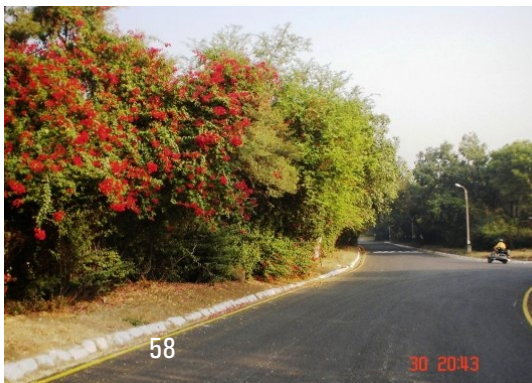
Faizi O. Hashmi, CHS/SSS (1979-84)



MY JNU DAYS: EXPERIMENTS WITH SOCIAL ISSUES

When I think of my six years as a student at Jawaharlal Nehru University (1974-80), the most striking thing which comes to my mind is: how a dynamic community of young scholars could weave an academic, social and political life that not just changed our world view, but in some way the course of history itself. In 1974, I entered not just another University but a new world of academic excellence. JNU acquired a halo within a short span of time through a combination of two factors.

First, the University had great academic talent from the Vice-Chancellor to the students. The University could attract eminent academics on its faculty from all over India and abroad. In the discipline of Sociology (Centre for the Study of Social Systems), where I joined MA in 1974, the veteran sociologist Professor Yogendra Singh was the head and other faculty members included Dr. T. K. Oommen, Dr. Partha Nath Mukherji, Dr. K. L. Sharma, Dr. C. N. Venugopal, Dr. M. N. Panini, and within a year or two Dr. Ravindra K. Jain joined the department. All of them were extraordinary in their own way as teachers and thinkers. Now they are no more on the faculty of JNU but they have left a lasting imprint not only in the discipline but also outside. In other departments on the old campus in those days we had intellectual giants like Prof. Sarvepally Gopal, Prof. Romila Thapar, Prof. Bipan Chandra, Prof. Rasheeduddin Khan, Prof. Bimal Prasad, to name a few. This community of scholars lifted the academic and intellectual discourse of the time to the highest level possible.



The second factor was that the students, who got admission to the post-graduate and M.Phil. courses, came from all parts of the country and Nepal. Because of the selection process those who came to JNU were the best group of young minds (I think it continues even today.) They came from varied social backgrounds and their life together in the University, to my mind, created the best academic atmosphere. As students, apart from the routine academic work, our task was to raise questions, fight with ourselves and teachers on national and international issues, and continue the fiery debates till late night. When I read the *Times of India* editorial on "How Dare You: Our education system frowns on students asking questions" (28 October 2008), I was thinking of our JNU days what a difference! I hope the old tradition continues even today. JNU contributed the finest minds to political parties, social institutions, academic and scientific centres, and administrative machinery of India as well as to international bodies.

Was JNU a hotbed of politics? Yes, it was. But with a difference. JNU was the only intellectual centre in those six years I was there, which responded to the emerging socio-political situations in the most positive way possible. 1974-80 was the period when Indian democracy passed through the most trying time. With Jayaprakash Narayan leading the mass movement against the one-party rule, autocracy, tyranny and the party which crushed people's freedom, the JNU campus witnessed the Socialists and Marxists holding hands to fight for democracy. Our student leaders were imprisoned during the political emergency and they came out victorious holding the flag of Indian democracy aloft.

For me personally, the JNU campus was a social-political laboratory. It provided opportunities for testing one's ideas and theories with like-minded friends as well as ideological foes. In a sense, JNU's exceptional intellectual ferment was grounded on reality which showed us how we should spend the rest of our life. The fraternity and camaraderie one developed in JNU stands in good stead everywhere; inside the country and all over the world; inside one's area of work and elsewhere. Everywhere one meets a JNUite the political divisions, ideological differences evaporate and a solidarity emerges.

The political, healthy and intellectually sound environment at JNU gave us enormous confidence to face the world and its many challenges better. Looking back, I could say: *gracias*, JNU.

George Mathew, Director, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi

AN INTRODUCTION TO INCREDIBLE INDIA

I came to India for the first time as a tourist; later, I was a student of JNU for six years. Post that, I have been working in India. My impression of India has changed over the years from a curious tourist to someone who calls India home. During my stay in JNU (i.e. 1999-2005) I met most amazing people, some of whom will always remain as my friends, I took part in events which I will always remember and I lived in a place that was second home to me. I was one of fortunate foreigners who could have most wonderful experiences in "incredible India".

Before joining the University I was really apprehensive about what was in store for me since I knew that India would be very different from my hometown in Japan. However, JNU provided me a good and secure opportunity to learn and understand about India. I really enjoyed staying in Sabarmati and Tapti hostels. I still miss my days hanging out with friends at the dhabas, FSA office, SIS & library canteens, and the Center.

My understanding about India, which I owe to mainly JNU, has helped me a lot in my career and personal life. My decision to stay and work in India is, to a great extent, influenced by my life in JNU.

Finally, I must also thank all my friends, classmates and faculty members for their warm support and help whether related to the studies or otherwise, throughout the course. Since I was always helped by others during my student days, I would be glad to share my experience with new foreign students and help them understand this wonderful country.

Hiroko Arakawa, Japanese Embassy, New Delhi



LOOKING BACK

Looking back these past 30 plus years, I think JNU was /is a great learning experience and for me, after a break from studies I had been working after completing my BA from LSR it was quite an eye opener. JNU was a big leap from Delhi University, for me at least.

I learned a lot about foreign affairs. International Law was my favourite. It was a treat: to be taught by such famous people...the visitors who used to come for guest lectures...the election scenes, demonstrations and protests from time to time. The term papers and the research work in the libraries helped me in my school teaching here (in the US), as I had learned to be confident by then. Even though I do not like to talk much, the exposure at JNU helped me in my school interviews and in my classes here. It would not have been possible for me to work in the school system with all the Americans, given their aggressiveness, independence and their habit of convincing others even when they are wrong...I guess I got lot of 'Americanism" JUST BY BEING IN JNU THOSE YEARS.!!! Always being in a girls' school and then a girls' college, it was very taxing to be with boys!!!! So I did not much care for the social activities...the after hours events etc.



MOST IMPORTANT, the bunch of friends I ended up making has become the most rewarding and positive experience of my life. Although I did not pursue a career, I am happy I have pursued my friendships. We all have our choices to make and I am glad I chose to enroll at JNU in 1973 for my Masters. The small size of our class has enabled us to rekindle those memories of the early seventies today. I am so proud of all my classmates who have gone on to become journalists, lawyers, teachers, professors and independent consultants....I think we did JNU proud!

Jaishri Mamtani (nee Gurnani), batch of '75, MA, SIS



OUT OF JNU

JNU. Whenever I hear any mention of it, it tugs at my heart. My being there has left an indelible impression on my being. Before I came to JNU, I had been at MSU, Baroda, which had been an absolutely wonderful experience, but JNU was something else. But, at first JNU felt like another planet! It had such a serious air about it and there was so much cerebral discussion over everything. I was nineteen and suddenly felt the need to grow up in a hurry.

I was in the first batch of MA students of SIS. It was then located at Feroz Shah Road (first two semesters) and the orange striped JNU bus took us there everyday and brought us back to what was later referred to as "down campus" or Old Campus later on. That daily trip introduced us to two impressive institutions: Sapru House and Tiwari the bus driver!

Before I came here, the world was more or less black or white. I now learnt that there were many, many shades of grey. What left quite a mark on me was the fact that brilliant arguments could be made for and against any



topic! A subject would be chosen and top politicians/entities of all persuasions would be invited to speak to jam-packed hexagonal halls where all such debates took place. And with each speaker, you heard some compelling arguments. You could be impressed as well as confused. But, most importantly, it taught me to listen to every side of an argument which I consider one of the greatest lessons I have ever learnt.

These august occasions could also drown you in paroxysms of laughter sometimes. Like the time when Pilo Mody arrived to speak (please google if you're wondering who he is) and it was suddenly realized that we didn't have a chair that could accommodate his ample girth!!

And, so our psyches were nourished and honed...many a dharna and many a strike against the mess contractor, the VC and even the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. She was not allowed to enter through the hallowed gates of JNU named after her father on the occasion of a convocation. We were threatened with "no convocation from now onward!" and we said "fine" to everyone's surprise. And, so, unlike other universities, there have been none since then, if I'm not mistaken.

We were surrounded by faculty who were the cream and envy of any educational institution. Imagine going in droves to listen to profs from other departments! Who can forget Bipan Chandra, Prabhat Patnaik, Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Kaviraj... We were surrounded by 'stars'. And, they were so human and had 'the touch'. One other such person was Dr Moonis Raza. On a personal level, I shall always remember how helpful and supportive Dr Bimal Prasad, Dr M S Agwani, Dr Urmila Phadnis and Dr K P Misra, were.

When we began classes, Dr Appadorai whose book I'd read for my BA came and taught us! Krishna Menon came and spoke to us...we were majorly in awe and couldn't believe our luck. Other 'stars' who taught us were M S Rajan, Venkataramani, the gentle K P Saxena, and acerbic R P Anand ... There was younger blood that also had us running enthusiastically to class. Imagine, we never ever 'bunked'! G P Deshpande and Pushpesh Pant were like search engines (could put google to shame) and raconteurs par excellence, with great dry humour to boot. Mohd Ayub, Ashok Guha, Narayanan and Jayashankar were also wonderful, inspired us and kept us totally involved in our subject and hungry for more. What more can you ask of your teacher?

Election time at JNU was unbelievable. The Free Thinkers (FTs), the SFI, and the Trotskites ("Trots" headed by Banaji and spoken for by Sri Prakash), the last didn't run for office but were very active. Anand Kumar and Prakash Karat stood on a chair or table in the mess after dinner and addressed the packed room. They were literally interrogated about their views on every debatable topic.... For our part, we stayed up nights doing election posters that ran in a series both sides matching wit for wit on the wall of the large canteen in the Club Building.

There were also long hours in the library, open till midnight before exams and manned by volunteer students for the extra hours. The curriculum, the inter-disciplinary approach, the brilliant profs, seminar papers, auditing subjects from other Schools in the Social Sciences, department seminars...This was an amazing training ground for cogent thinking and confidence building. We learnt to ask questions bravely and answer to the best of our ability in turn. The sheer breadth and depth of experience as a student in class as well as on campus was amazing. Everything was way ahead of its time. (Including hostels that had no timings!)

On the lighter side, there was a great time had on campus and in the hostel. Dinnertime dilemmas of choosing between mutton curry and kheer if you were a non-vegetarian and wanting to cry out for your mother when you had to forego one of the two! Running to catch the bus or sprinting up the short cut to "up campus" at lunchtime on Wednesdays, so as not to miss out on the *pakoris* in the *kadhi*! (If you didn't get there in the first half hour, all the *pakoris* would have been fished out and finished.) Evening walks after dinner and chai in dog-licked cups at the dhaaba...magical moonlit trips to Parthasarthy Rocks, ahem...Standing in a queue at some enterprising soul's ground floor verandah for *bhaang*



on Holi ... A chance to see the best of theatre thanks to Alkazi and Tanvir. Going for Hindustani classical concerts with your gang and sitting on the stage with a two buck ticket, inches away from all time greats at Kamani. Then walking to Super Bazaar and waiting for the hourly "night specials" (buses!) to IIT, and walking up and back to a stone-cold mess dinner left in its steel compartmentalized *thaali* on your desk by a helpful pal... Going around with stale bread at 2am, asking for, pickle, *daal-mooth*, anything to put on it and eat while writing term papers... burning scrap paper in the wire dustbin to warm your hands in winter while writing to meet deadlines as the wind howled outside... The radiating and soaring heat in summer on a new campus where there wasn't a blade of grass (who would believe that today?!) Om Prakash the dhobi in his potbelly-hugging bright Benlon T-shirts, his demeanour begging to be caricatured... Oh, I could go on and on.



Many from our batch of 1975 have got together in cyberspace and formed a groupsite on Yahoo. It feels like just the other day when we talked and one can hear the din and laughter in the classroom. Lasting bonds, a storehouse of experiences and shared interests keep us talking. There are jokes from Bedi as usual (occasional dinners at his place on campus too)...discussions on the US elections, the world economy, politics in India, the curse of communalism, Prakash Karat and Sitaram Yechury...doesn't feel like we've left JNU!!

This memoir is also being written at 2am in keeping with the best of traditions. I'd say, 'you can take a student out of JNU but you cannot take JNU out of a student'!!!

JNU ko salaam!

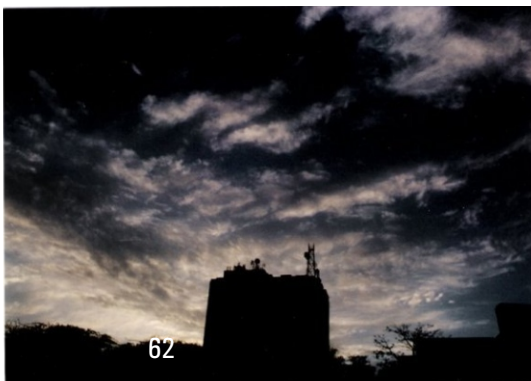
Jayashree Joshi Eashwar



MY EXPERIENCES WITH JNU

It is more than 16 years since I left JNU but I can feel its impact even now every day. A conscious decision to abjure the path of material success, or even the pursuit of name or fame, was probably an outcome of dialogue with self during my days at JNU. In a society that is largely accused of subjecting individuals, especially youth to all round intellectual and moral subjugation, JNU would probably be one of the most unique institutions that consciously seek to impart the requisite training and courage to its students to stand for his or her convictions - and that too without being intimidated by the strength of the opponent or even being revengeful towards any one in the process.

I did oppose some of my best friends but I continue to admire their positive qualities even now. I also remember my university days for taking several "wrong" decisions and making inappropriate choices, defying the dominant sub-culture of the place. But I still had lot of space for my self and at the same time I had so many friends across all political or ideological divides on whom I could always depend. I also wonder how poorer I would have been today in terms of knowledge and experience had the liberal ambience of



JNU not allowed me to commit those mistakes. I admit that no institution can drastically alter your values and entirely re-shape your character, but it can always introduce a marginal shift in your perceptions or inject a little extra push in your momentum that could drastically change the very course of your life. JNU offered an ambience full of opportunities to discover the moral courage and strength of character to stand by whatever one perceived right and correct. However, it would be too naïve (or dishonest) to attempt description of everything in JNU in absolute or superlative terms as reality can never be absolute or positive in all its aspects. JNU had a fair mix of academic brilliance and intellectual inadequacies, strength of character and lack of moral courage. But in relative terms the positives far outweigh the negatives.

I vividly remember the day I joined JNU. I had come from Kolkata to pursue MA at the Centre for Political Studies (CPS). There was a senior from Kolkata who initially looked after me but within no time I had so many friends from virtually all parts of the country. It was difficult to keep track of all of them even though I valued my friendship with each one of my friends. Some of my best friends were from places far away from my own. They spoke a language at home or ate such food which would have remained alien from me had I not met them in JNU. All these friends were such wonderful human beings that I struggle to find their replicas outside. Some of their gestures were so moving that I feel privileged to have even known them.

During my days at JNU, several of the activities outside the class room were probably too exciting and teachers had to try something extra to sustain the interest of students in the classrooms. The freedom we enjoyed in the classroom to raise questions or even air our own views was enormous. I distinctly remember telling one of my favourite teachers, in a class on political philosophy, that his entire hypothesis was wrong. He was initially shocked and I felt a little guilty as well. But in the next class he gave me full opportunity to prove my point and encouraged me to do so. I also remember the same teacher not taking any offence to my observation that no criteria or examination had still been evolved which could accurately assess knowledge of an examinee or a student of humanities. I had gone to the extent of stating that marks given by the teacher concerned in the last examination were merely an expression of opinion that I had to accept due to the inadequacy of the system. The teacher took no offence and quoted this statement on quite a few occasions.

There were many friends in JNU who opposed ideologies claiming a righteous position and envisaging destruction and annihilation of all adherents of opposing schools of thought. But such ideological aggressions and rivalries were confined to passionate speeches only. I also remember many instances when friends across all political and ideological divides came together to prevent a debate or discussion from turning ugly. They were all committed to preserve the unique legacy of JNU, which has been handed down from the very first few batches and refined regularly by the subsequent ones. The instances of tolerance, civility and grace to accept a divergent perception were far too many compared to few acts of intolerance and even crudity.

However, during my last few months in the University, some of the new students did make us realise our collective failure to help the newcomers adequately handle the enormous intellectual and social freedom that JNU had conferred upon them. This was especially when they virtually passed judgements on views of some of the most reputed teachers of JNU itself or even scholars from outside. Physical prevention of some visiting speakers from addressing a gathering inside JNU was also painful to those who valued the culture of open debate and discussion. I remember many occasions when JNU students had read extensively on a subject to confront a visiting speaker and it was done in such a subtle manner that none could take offence.

I cherish my days at JNU for the unbridled freedom of thoughts and ideas it gave me. I experienced an ambience in JNU during my days where all agreed on their right to disagree - but in a fairly civil manner.

Jitendra Kumar, MA from SSS and M. Phil from SIS in late 1980s and early 1990s, and is presently a mid-level civil servant in the Government of India



CHANDRASHEKHAR'S CAMPUS

*I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night,
 Alive as you and me.
 Says I "But Joe, you're ten years dead"
 "I never died" said he,
 "I never died" said he.
 "The Copper Bosses killed you Joe,
 they shot you Joe" says I.
 "Takes more than guns to kill a man"
 Says Joe "I didn't die"
 Says Joe "I didn't die"
 And standing there as big as life
 and smiling with his eyes.
 Says Joe "What they can never kill
 went on to organize,
 where working-men defend their rights,
 it's there you find Joe Hill,
 it's there you find Joe Hill!"*



Comrade Chandrashekhar, twice elected JNUSU President, was once asked during a Presidential Debate whether he was contesting because he was 'ambitious.' He said yes, he was ambitious, but the scope of his ambitions went far beyond being elected JNUSU President: he aimed to live like Bhagat Singh and die like Che. It wasn't a piece of rhetoric he did actually keep his word, when he became a whole-time activist of the CPI(ML) and was shot dead in Siwan at the behest of a criminal MP.



When asked to write for a souvenir to mark a JNU alumni meet, I thought to write about Chandrashekhar (I was privileged to be Joint-Secretary in the Union during his second tenure as President) whom many JNU alumni would remember and who, along with Naveen Babu, another student of that generation who became a revolutionary and was killed in an encounter in Andhra Pradesh, continues to startle us by appearing in our dreams not of the past, but of the future!



Today JNU students are being told they are in contempt of the Hon'ble Supreme Court for fielding a candidate more than once. One can't help feeling, at such times, that contempt is being expressed for the best democratic traditions of JNU, and for activists like Chandrashekhar, who did not contest JNUSU polls out of puny personal ambition but who dared to have ambitions to challenge and change the society they live in.

Chandu's spirit was one of bold intervention in all the key political questions of his time: the communal Mandir phenomenon; the casteist frenzy against Mandal; the policies of privatization; a range of people's movements on the issues of caste, gender, and class. Energetic architect of All India Students'

Association (AISA), then a new students' organisation, he caught the imagination of many of us who had just joined JNU, with campaigns that changed the face of JNU dramatically. In 1993, the year I joined JNU, the Union led by AISA campaigned successfully to restore Deprivation Points for students from backward castes, regions and gender. The JNUSU reached out in solidarity with a wide range of people's movements all over the country. And in 1995, the Union led by Chandrashekhar achieved a landmark victory when it stalled a move to privatise JNU.

The movement that followed Chandrashekhar's death was one of the most remarkable outpourings of mass student activism on the streets of Delhi. That struggle, braving police lathis and water-cannons, was a great tribute to Chandrashekhar's own spirit and politics.

In later years, when students of JNU boldly kicked out an MNC and defended the campus from corporatisation; joined the cry to scrap AFSPA, both on the streets of Delhi and Manipur; held a hunger strike for over a month to defend OBC quotas from the elitist anti-reservationists; waged and won battles to democratise JNU through increased MCM fellowships and recognition for Madarsa certificates; looked the Prime Minister in the eye to show him black flags; rallied with the protesting peasants of Singur and Nandigram, Kalinganagar and Khammam, and refused to be seduced by equation of development with SEZs and corporate land grab; risked rustication to protest when workers are denied minimum wages on campus; spoke out in solidarity with those being witch-hunted in the name of being Muslim or Naxalite... their political impulses have kept alive Chandrashekhar's spirit and his politics.

In most of the media coverage of the Supreme Court stay on JNUSU elections, the impression being given is that JNU students are stubbornly hell-bent on 'violating' the Supreme Court orders on Lyngdoh recommendations. The entire debate is being reduced to "age barrier" and "repeat of candidates" and "attendance" but for all those who have been shaped by JNU's unique political and academic culture, it is quite apparent that all that JNU stands for is under attack.

The Lyngdoh Committee recommendations have, unfortunately, been unable as yet to sow the sapling of democracy in campuses where democracy has been denied or distorted for decades. However, to many of us who are witness to the hours of painstaking debate and careful deliberation that has gone into framing, implementing and amending each clause in the JNUSU Constitution, it seems that the attempt to impose Lyngdoh recommendations in place of the JNUSU Constitution is like chopping down a live, flourishing, sturdy tree in order to replace it with a tiny, well-pruned bonsai. Democracy in student politics has grown organically in JNU: it simply does not need to be transplanted from outside.

The JNUSU Constitution has been voluntarily framed and implemented by students themselves; and JNU Student Unions are held accountable by students, and play a conscious and constructive role on the campus and in society. Surely other campuses should be encouraged to emulate such self-imposed responsibility, political maturity and democracy, which, incidentally, has been more successful in keeping campuses free money and muscle power than the Lyngdoh Committee's own experience till date. Instead, this is the only campus which is being singled out for 'stay' on the election process!

JNU is one of the places where student activism has been marked, not by anti-social violence and corruption but by social conscience, public spirit and the best expression of the youthful urge to tackle social injustices. The fact that such a model is being branded a disruption of 'discipline' and 'law and order' instead of being applauded and nurtured suggests that the establishment feels far more threatened by the social commitment and spirit of the student movement than by lumpen violence on campuses.

JNU, for me, was about learning to frame an academic argument in the classroom, where no one took "attendance,"



and classes would regularly stretch far beyond the mandated two hours as students argued out positions fiercely over cups of tea provided by the hapless professor. For an introverted and intensely private person, it was exhilarating to discover a world of warm solidarity, collectivity and comradeship created in the course of late-night debates at the dhabas, marching in torch-light processions, writing leaflets and organising movements. To me, it seems urgent to fight to defend the ground where thousands of other students will continue to discover such worlds.

Kavita Krishnan, JNUSU Joint Secretary in 1995, now a Central Committee member of the CPI(ML)

JNU, AFTER POL POT

It was a long, long time ago. I still remember that I was so thrilled to learn that I was awarded a scholarship to study in India for three years in early 1982. We had just emerged from the dark period under the tyrannic rule of the Khmer Rouge (Communist Khmer). I was doubtful of my ability to communicate in English even though I had learned a bit of English in the prewar years of early 1970s. We were unfortunate to be thrown into the abyss of darkness for 3 years and 8 months by the KR and forgot all about our education.

When I alighted from the plane from Moscow at the Palam International Airport, I was puzzled by the people around trying to hustle us into their taxis or buses. Then someone approached us and introduced himself as a coordinating officer from the ICCR. We, 15 of us all together, hesitated until Mr. Singh produced our name list and showed it to us. Mr. Singh put us all in three taxis and took us to a guest house near the ICCR. He then left us there with the assurance that we would be contacted by the Jawaharlal University in due course.

After three days that we spent roaming around the place, Prof H.C. Narang and Prof. S K Sareen contacted us at the Guest House. They then sent a mini bus to pick us up the next morning and brought us to JNU. We were introduced to the teaching team at the Centre of Linguistics and English, School of Languages, in the Old Campus of JNU. I guess, most of them were struggling to understand us with our broken English and heavy use of gestures. Some of us did not even know what is shoulder and what is tongue. Most of the teachers were young students doing their post graduate education in the University.

Our day to day classes was conducted in the Old Campus and we all later moved to stay at the New Campus Hostels. The girls were at Godavary whereas the boys were lodged in I think a hostel called Periyar.

Apart from learning in classes, we made contact with the student community at the hostels. At first we found that most of the students were looking down at us as most of them were post graduates. Nevertheless, we found the members of the communist group were very friendly and helpful.



We later made friends with hostel mates and learned quite a great deal from them. It was very hard for us for the first year. We ran into trouble when we were on holiday in Kashmir in 1982, but it was a good lesson for us as well. We moved from place to place, played sports and got along with the student community. Our classes were truly wonderful thanks to our hard working young teachers. We regarded them as our Gurus, who, in our tradition, despite their age difference, are regarded as second parents.

The JNU Campus was a breeding place of all kind of politics in India. There were Iranian right wing groups, Afghan student movements, Palestinian groups, and all Indian political wings. They usually fought with each other or went on demonstrations and strikes. Despite all this, we made friends with most of them and tried to avoid becoming involved in their political movements. The hardest time for us there was during the time of unrest after the assassination of PM Ms. Indira Gandhi. The Campus was cut off from the rest of the city and we ran out of food and other social activities.

Our study yielded us good result. We graduated in April 1985 which was a very happy and exciting moment for us. We were given a mere certificate, but that did not matter to us at all. We were very keen on coming back home and serving our country as we promised. JNU is also a place of everlasting memory for me as I met my wife there though we got married later. Both of us have served in the same Ministry later on and found it very hard as the Ministry policy does not allow couples to be posted together in one place. A few years later, I was sent back as First Secretary to our Embassy in New Delhi which gave me a good chance to revisit the old place of memory and my former teachers. I often called on GJV Prasad and his wife, Kamala, "Sir Pramesh" and "Lady Sonya", Prof. Sareen and Prof. Narang.

I also had a chance to visit Ms. Pappu and Ms. Shubhashri in Madras (now Chennai) when I made an official visit there later. They were very happy to see me and we chatted for half the morning about the old days when we were students and teachers. Those were wonderful days, the stuff of sweet memories, our time at JNU, in both the two campuses. **Keo Chhea**, was at JNU from April 1982 April 1985 and is now Coordinator, Specialized Programme Unit, ASEAN

A SLEEPY LITTLE UNIVERSITY

I first joined JNU in 1976 for a very brief period and again regularly in 1977 in what was then known as CLE/SL. The main campus was primarily in a building opposite Ber Sarai, where now you have a Police staff college and where till recently you also had the campus of IDSA. It was a sleepy, little university. In a sense it was also the only university in India at that time with a distinctly pan-Indian profile. We had students from all over the Indian sub-continent.

At that time, Delhi seemed to come to a topographic end with the new campus still in a state of nascent under-development. Beyond the campus the roads which now lead to Vasant Kunj from both the Vasant Vihar and IIMC side did not exist. It was all pristine wild in some sort of communion with a primeval, originary feel. Peculiar, isn't it? A modern university in the midst of resonance that seemed to extend itself beyond time....

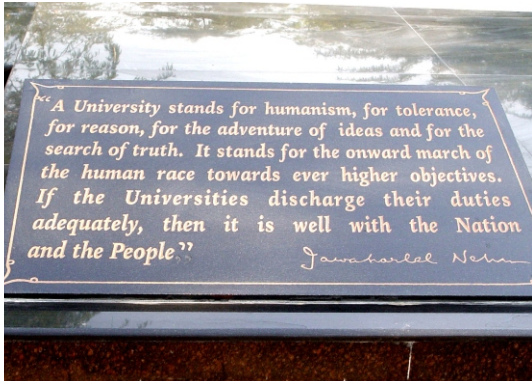
I must confess to being completely overwhelmed by this tumultuous coming together of so many people from such diverse backgrounds and cultures. It was sort of a mini-renaissance, very lively and thought-provoking. At that time...I'm talking of a time much before half the JNU students started sitting for UPSC exams, JNU was a very fertile breeding ground for all sorts of intellectual and political activity. Ours was a modest department and was not as elitist as the rest of the departments such as the Centre of Historical Studies and Centre of Economic Studies, etc. We had an exceptional teacher, Prof. Daswani, who taught us General Linguistics and brilliant Kapil Kapoor Sir who taught us Indian Linguistics theory. Kapoor Sir was an amazing teacher. I will place him next to Umberto Eco whom I consider to be the best teacher I have had. We had some truly outstanding students in the Centre who subsequently made it big. I can especially name Prof. Gautam Sengupta among them.

The campus was at that time divided into two camps: the Left and the Free Thinkers. Elections were times of infinite intellectual excitement. We pored over books through the night in the library and prepared ourselves for the debate the



next day. It was great to witness the likes of Prakah Karat, Sitaram Yechury, Jairus Banaji, Anand Kumar (now Professor in the same University) debate over philosophical, political and economic issues.

I was with the Left. In fact, the girl I eventually married (she is South-Indian) was initially a Free Thinker and subsequently a firebrand SFI leader who became the first women President of the Students' Union and I became the First Man of the Campus in the Campus in the bargain. Such inter-caste and inter-religious marriages were happening all around us and we were no exception.



I wish JNU was a little less crowded than it is now. I would like to see JNU a little better connected with the world outside. Mind you, this is not a critique! I want the students at JNU to have courses in the History of Ideas and Cultural Studies. I want them to pursue a lot more vigorously and proactively studies in ecology and new technologies.

I do not want to see JNU as a university without an independent course in media studies and even film Studies. Some of these studies must also be geared towards production. At the same time I wouldn't want JNU to become a polytechnic in the service of media-houses and TV channels. These are the things we did not have in our days but I hope students in future will have them and benefit from them.

Madan Gopal Singh, Academic, Sufi Singer

SPORTS AND OTHER FIELDS



After I did my BA in Economics Hons from St Joseph's College, Darjeeling I joined Centre for Economic Studies in Planning, School of Social Sciences for my Masters degree in 1980. Since I wanted to work on issues of economic cooperation and integration, I shifted to Centre for South, Central and South East Asian Studies, School of International Studies for my MPhil and PhD degrees. I joined the same Centre directly as an Associate Professor in 1992 and was made a Professor in 2000 at the age of 39. I remained Chairperson of the Centre till 2007 when I was appointed as the founding Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Sikkim. I also worked as the warden and provost of various hostels on campus and served various university committees.



We had a very enjoyable time as students, of which the most memorable part were the class room lectures by our teachers like Amit Bhaduri, Sunanda Sen, Anjan Mukherji, Krishna Bhardwaj, Prabhat Panaiik, Utsa Patnaik, DN Rao, Sheila Bhalla, Amal Sanyal, CP Chandrasekhar, SK Jain, I N Mukherji, SD Muni, Urmila Phadnis, LS Baral, Kalim Bahadur and Bimal Prasad. These were all illustrious figures and gave us their best. I would never forget the way we used to line up in front of the central library much before it used to open at nine in the morning. All to ensure we got a good seat! Those days library used to be very crowded as there were no internet facilities and other means of accessing information. The library staff was

very friendly, and we used to know each one of them by name.

A similar thing used to happen in the long beautiful orange colour JNU bus that used to leave every morning for both Sapru House (Indian Council of World Affairs Library) and Teen Murti Library. There were 666+ buses that used to start at Poorvanchal and make a round of Munirka and AIIMS and come back to the campus. Its plying-frequency used to be the only 'everyday' issue in the otherwise 'high-sounding' manifestoes of the student leaders during elections. To have a bicycle and motor cycle was a luxury and a privilege then. Cars were far fetched articles even among the faculty members.

Since many of us were never in any political bodies and the students union activities, much of our extra time was devoted to sports and writing. Besides academic writings, I did write a large number of pieces in *Mainstream*, *Hindustan Times*, *Patriot*, *Economic Times* during my student days. We had a very good football team and I captained the JNU team possibly for the first time in the Inter-University Football tournament. In those days, organizers used to pick up students from JNU to work during most international events in the city. This is how I got the opportunity to work in the 2nd World Book Fair in 1981, IXth Asian Games in 1982 and the 7th Non-aligned Summit in 1983 and several other such major events. I met sportspersons like Lydia de Vega, the fastest woman of Asia from Philippines, Han Jian world Badminton Champion from China, and world leaders like Fidel Castro, Yasser Arafat, Col Godaffi, Zia-ul-Haque and Indira Gandhi at these events.

An indelible imprint in my journey here was the time when we were all forced to leave the campus after the university had declared a sine die closure and many of my friends were court arrested and sent to Tihar Jail in 1983. The liberal values JNU provided in terms of intellectual space, cultural freedom and social appreciation are the post unforgettable part of my experience here. It was remarkable to see people differ seriously and yet eat together. Human dignity and rights always remained on top of the agenda in any discussion on campus here.

Mahendra Lama, Vice Chancellor, Sikkim University

THE DISTINCT WORLD OF JNU: THE FORMATIVE YEARS

It was quite by accident that I happened to join the Institute of Russian Studies (IRS) in July 1968 immediately after I had passed out of school. IRS was then temporarily based in the campus of IIT-Delhi. There were about sixty students in my batch and they included several government officials and a few army officers as well. Most of the faculty members at that time were from Russia. The interaction with people from diverse background and of different age groups, mother tongues, regions, cultures, faiths, castes, gender, etc., in a pleasant atmosphere was a novel and exhilarating experience.

As we know, 1968 was also a unique year in many respects. Among other major events, 1968 was also the heyday of student activism across the world not only against social ills of all kind but also for educational reforms in general. The first occasion when I actually joined a political demonstration was also in 1968, when, led by the senior students of IRS, we took out a protest march against the sudden invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and three other member-states of the Warsaw Pact from IIT campus to Haus Khas market, where an extension centre of IRS was then located.

Well before our batch had joined IRS, steps were afoot to build a permanent campus for the institute on a plot of land that lay to the west of IIT (and it turned out to be part of the 1000-acre plot of land that was eventually allotted to JNU). The following academic session (1969-1970), IRS shifted to the new campus.

Soon after the session began, we were informed that IRS would become one of the centres of the proposed School of Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Prof. Moonis Raza, then an Officer on Special Duty and subsequently the first Rector of JNU, came to IRS and held an interactive session with the students and faculty members to explain



the plan. All of us were thrilled by the fact that we were going to be part of a university founded in honour of India's first Prime Minister and one of the world's tallest statesmen.

JNU was temporarily housed in the building complex that was initially built for the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. The Indian School of International Studies was merged with JNU as the School of International Studies (SIS). There were about 200 students at SIS at that time. Many of those who were at SIS were sensitive to social issues. Some of them had already taken active part in movements for social justice including anti-war, anti-apartheid, and pro-Palestinian movements.



The visit of Prime Minister Edward Heath to New Delhi in the second week of January 1971 provided an opportunity to protest against the British Government's tacit support to the apartheid regime of South Africa. When Mr. Heath came to address a function at Sapru House, JNU students protested inside the auditorium and outside it and about fifty of us were arrested and detained at the Tilak Marg Police Station. Late in the evening, the Vice-Chancellor, Mr. Parthasarathi, personally came to the police station to get us released on bail.

During 1971-1973, intake of students to SIS, SSS and SLS was confined to M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes while SL had undergraduate and diploma courses. Thus, about 300 under-graduate students from SL had the opportunity of intermingling with about 300 research students from SIS, SSS and SLS. This interaction proved extremely beneficial; unlike most other campuses across the country, the problem of ragging never crept into JNU.



To link academics with social concerns, a platform called JNU Discussion Forum was set up in 1971, which met once a week. Concurrently, the need for a students' union also arose. Soon a draft constitution of the students' union was circulated and approved through broad consensus among the students. A unique feature of the Constitution was that the entire election process was to be conducted by the students themselves without the direct involvement of the University administration at any level. The University did provide infrastructural support in the form of office space for the students' union, two office assistants, and the list of bonafide students of the University, which formed the electoral roll. In the words of Mr. N.V.K.Murthy, who took over as Registrar of JNU in January 1972: "...the Vice-Chancellor [Mr. G. Parthasarathi] was of the view that the University administration had no business to interfere with the right of the students to choose their representatives." The first election to JNUSU was held in October 1971. The Election Commission, which only consisted of unanimously selected student members from CRS and SIS, conducted the elections smoothly.



The unique contribution of the first batches of students of JNU was

democratising the process of admission to JNU and creating a congenial atmosphere for discussions and debates, which went on late into the night on almost every subject under the sun without animosity, acrimony or ill will. To prevent JNU from becoming an elitist institution, a unique weightage system was introduced to reduce the disadvantages faced by students from rural and backward regions, less privileged institutions, less privileged social background, etc, to provide an opportunity as equal as possible to all students to get admitted to JNU. Students had to wage a determined struggle during 1972-1973 to achieve this laudable goal, which is one of the enduring legacies of JNU.

It was Nehru's considered view that: "A University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth." One can proudly claim that the vast majority of JNU's alumni have tried to imbibe and spread that vision. However, since 1992, there has been a determined attempt by the powers that be to erase the Nehruvian legacy; JNU has not been completely immune from that process. Under the circumstances, past and present students of JNU should try their utmost to ensure that pursuit of 'humanism', 'tolerance', 'reason' and 'truth' are not expended in the name of expediency and change.

N.D. Jayaprakash, Centre of Russian Studies, SL, 1968-1974

JNU IN THE SEVENTIES

When I was asked to write my memories of the days I spent in JNU, I wondered what to write about the seventies which was exciting which still catches my imagination now?

It was in 1973 when I joined MA program in CSSS/SSS. That was the second batch of MA in CSSS. I came from Delhi University being persuaded by my late cousin, Natrajan (or Nattoo). Natrajan studied at CSRD/SSS and belonged to the first batch. This was a period when there was the excitement of a new university coming up and trying to give shape and show a 'new' direction to India. The structure of the university and the nature of pedagogy and evaluation were new in higher education circles. Semester, grades and term papers/assignments were equally new. Unlike traditional universities, JNU encouraged students from various regions of India to join; and this made the campus unique and a cauldron in which various cultures of India co-mingled and co-existed.

The faculty in JNU in Sociology at that time was small. I recall Yogendra Singh, TK Oommen, Partho Mukherji, Ravindra Jain, Panini and Venugopal. All these teachers were not only helpful and considerate to students, but encouraged them to raise questions and discuss any issue and express even dissent. As I discovered later this feature was what was common to JNU and perhaps gave it that unique identity in the country.

Dipankar Gupta and Anand Kumar, now senior faculty members at CSSS/SSS, were then students enrolled for research. Then there were visiting professors, like Sudhir Kakkar and Roy-Burman. Joginder Gandhi and Nandu Ram joined later. As for my class, it was not large. I recollect Bikram Nanda (now no more), Aravind Pinto (who joined IRS), Andreis Rukobo from Zimbabwe, Renuka (now in CSSS/SSS), Uma Kant Awasthi (now in Rohtak) amongst them. Classes were held in the 'old' campus.

Those who stayed in hostels were given single rooms in the newly constructed hostel in 'new' campus, called Kaveri. I was the first occupant of my room in the west wing. Periyar - the other boy's hostel was still being given final touches when I shifted to Kaveri. Students from the old campus later shifted to Periyar, while Godavari became the hostel for women. The other hostels of like Sutlej, Ganga and Jhelum came up later.

At the time I took admission there were only four schools functioning International Studies, Languages, Social Sciences, and Life Sciences. All the other schools that exist today have come up much later. The campus was small in size, so nearly everyone knew each other. Scholars of international repute would come to the campus and that gave an opportunity for one and all to hear them.



Although small in size, the campus student politics was active. In the year I joined, Prakash Karat (now the secretary of CPM) contested for the post of President of JNUSU and won; and his opponent was Anand Kumar. In the following year, Anand won and Prakash lost. But what stood out were the campaign and the high degree of involvement in elections by students. The other feature was that the elections were conducted by a body called the election commission - comprising of students! The entire exercise in student elections, in retrospect, appears to have been a political carnival of sorts.



I recollect that the first wall newspaper called 'Spotlight' which focused on major campus news and cartoons of events to do with JNU, was brought out by a few of us. Our cartoonists were Sampad Mohapatra (now with NDTV), Nagesh Hegde (who later joined Deccan Herald group in Bangalore) and Rajendra Ray.

The seventies was an era in which major changes were taking place in India; and JNU was being shaped by them as much as helping to shape these events. I still recollect the meeting in which Jayprakash Narayan addressed students on the lawns of the old campus. Of the numerous visitors, the visits by Mother Teresa and Kaifi Azmi and Bhupen Hazarika, the question and answer session with Kuldip Nayar are all etched in my memory.



The emergency was a watershed; and the campus was affected in various ways. Perhaps what stands out were students being hauled up on an early July morning in 1975, with the campus being surrounded by police vehicles. Some of the students were detained under MISA. Subsequently other students got arrested; and amongst them were Sudhindra, Jasvir, DP Tripathi, and others. Jasvir's incarceration stands out because of the third degree treatment that was meted out to him. During that period, Shashi Shekar Singh, Hari Rama Murthy, Yogesh Sharma, Ranjana Kumari, Anjana, Digvijay Singh, Chengal Reddy, Ramesh Dixit, Bandana Misra and others, including me, contributed in various ways to see that the emergency was lifted, political prisoners freed and democracy restored in India. In this effort the contribution of various teachers was no less important and significant. This aspect unfortunately has not got the necessary recognition in the subsequent literature that has been written about that period of JNU.



After the emergency, in the elections to JNUSU, I lost to Sitaram Yechury; and thereafter JNU student politics took another turn. But I moved on to academics and left JNU in 1979. But my sister joined JNU soon thereafter as a faculty member in French; and that has enabled me to keep in touch with JNU and the developments taking place there. Her presence there has also helped in renewing ties with old friends and associates belonging to my era.

N. Rajaram, Professor, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

HOSTEL LIFE, ELECTIONS, JNU

I was fortunate to become part of this great institution when I took admission in M.A. CPS on 14th August 1992 barely a few minutes before the admission process was to expire. For a person like me, who had never been outside my home state, Orissa, it was completely a different experience. On the first day of my JNU life I was a stranger to everyone around me. Elsewhere, probably it would have been difficult to survive, but not in JNU. Ironically when I completed my PhD from South Asia studies, SIS, in 2001 August, it was completely opposite to my first experience in JNU. That's the strength of a university like JNU. It was my good fortune to work with Prof. Kalim Bahadur for my research in South Asian Studies.

The nine years I have spent in JNU will remain the best part of my life forever. Each and every day of my JNU life, I had something to learn from others. It's a miniature India where people from every nook and corner of the country, besides students from abroad including our neighbouring countries, are an integral part of the system. Mutual respect and learning from each other cutting across region, religion, caste, economic status, language, gender, ideology etc, is a part of campus culture that treats everyone equally whether from Kalahandi or from Dibrugarh.

Within a few days of 'not-knowing anyone' on the campus I found a place to stay when a senior offered to make me his guest in Sabarmati Hostel, as I was not allotted a room. Eventually when allotted a room I opted from Narmada as many of classmates were staying there. Narmada was a unique hostel as it was meant for M.A. and B.A. students only. For other non-Narmada residents it was a 'kids' hostel' as female students were not allowed inside the hostel. But it was a lively hostel anytime of the semester. I felt extremely happy to be part of Narmada as people were friendly and helpful in nature. Table Tennis (TT) was our favourite option in the evenings, as TV was not preferred like these days as initially it was the pre-multi channel cable TV era. It was a routine for me and my friends to visit Ganga Dhaba in the wee hours for a cup of milk-tea which was another way of meeting friends from other hostels. Burning topics of the day used to dominate the discussion over countless cups of tea.

The main mode of communicating with parents was writing letters regularly and calling home once in ten days. The campus had only one phone booth in the first year of my JNU life, which was at Teflas. There was a coupon system for making a call during off-peak hours. Collecting a coupon and calling home was a herculean task not only because it was costly but also because of long hours of waiting. After the class we used to rush back to hostel to wait for the postman as getting a letter from home was such a joy that no words can express. During my Narmada days, I was also part of the Mess Committee as many of my friends insisted me to contest the election.

During this period, Prof. Y. K. Alagh, our Vice Chancellor visited our hostel more than anyone would expect him to. He was a student-friendly and accessible. Coincidentally, Prof. Alagh visited us during one of our hostel GBMs when we demanded that the administration should treat us equally with other hostels by allowing the entry of girl students inside the hostel as well as having a gym in Narmada. Prof Alagh had an uncanny knack of winning the hearts of the students which was in full display that night when he said he was fortunate not to belong to our age group and in not living in Narmada. Narmada was made accessible to girls within one year.

My Sabarmati days too were special. A co-ed hostel, Sabarmati was an experiment which was not only successful but has helped in the institution of more co-ed hostels in JNU. There were a few attempts to scrap the experience both in 1997 and in 1999 by the administration on some pretext or the other. I was part of the campaign and struggle against the move by administration to abandon Sabarmati experiment. A determined attempt to convert Sabarmati was made in 1999 by the administration which compelled all the residents to meet all our senior professors and the Deans of all the schools to retain the character of the hostel. Ultimately the administration had to realize the mistake.

Another incident during my years in the campus was the JNU community's response to the devastating cyclone in Orissa in 1999. An unbelievable overwhelming response by every section of the JNU community helped us collect funds



and materials not only from within the campus but from outside also for the people in Orissa. A team of 40 members consisting of senior professors and students visited Orissa and distributed the relief materials directly to the affected people in Jagatsinghpur district.



Last but not the least, while I was fortunate in many respects, whether my teachers or friends, room-mates, being part of the JNUSU Election committee was special. I was a member for a few years before signing out as the Election Committee Chairperson in 2000. The election process in JNU not only provides democratic freedom but issues discussed and debated are of high quality. There is absolutely no money power influencing the voting patterns. Keeping away from printed posters, banners or stickers, money or muscle power, the spirit of community participation makes it truly an exercise one would wish to be part of. This has been evolved over the years and the credit must go to our seniors those who have been part of this system either as elected representatives, teachers, or election committee members and moreover to all those who have studied in JNU since its inception. The strength of this system was proved once again in 2000 during my tenure as the Chairperson of EC when the margin of victory/loss was just one vote. This would have created a different situation in another university.

Nihar Ranjan Das, M.A., CPS 1992-94, and M.Phil 1994-96 and Ph.D. 2001, South Asian Studies, SIS

MY ASSOCIATION WITH JNU



A beautiful continuing association started nearly three decades ago. JNU nurtures you fondly when on campus. After that, it lives and strangely grows *in* you. The nostalgia of one's alma mater lives in each one of us - that's natural, you would say. But *grows* in you? Yes, the spirit of JNU certainly grows in you. *That* is the catalyst in you which mellows you as you experience the world, but also keeps the flame of social consciousness alive in you. *That* is the nutrient imbued in one's early youth which continues to keep you a healthy citizen.



My early days in the campus were spent with a sense of awe. The academic routine with *teachers eminent* was the sheet rock providing stability. The campus was the brown dry earth, with saplings (waiting to mature into the great trees in the campus today) providing the semblance of green cover, here and there. The flush of yellow, pink, magenta and white bougainvillea brought great colour and cheer. The abundant *amaltas* hanging like yellow lanterns in cool March and April, taught us what *basant* was. In the heat of June, trudging along the dusty mud walk to that distant library, post lunch was then a toil - now fondly remembered. The not so occasional class in our Professor's home in the evenings, could have been more frequent. The food that she cooked and served, the simultaneous teaching and learning, blended beautifully with the soft Hindustani classical music which flowed in the backdrop. Idyllic, is it? Yes, it was. But that was JNU.

Tumult was not late to come. The agitation of '83. The arrests of students, several kept in Tihar, the closure of the hostels and so on. For those of us who remained for a while in the hostels, the mess would not work. As a protest, we decided to cook food in the hostel. My CV could probably say- culinary skill to cater for a minimum of 100 adults. Bengali, Tamil, Bihari and Telugu dishes were served with great ease. Washing the dishes was no issue. But this was not for long, we were asked to vacate and leave the campus.

The next few years were spent living 'up campus' with classes 'down campus'. The great seminars with brilliant academics from all over the world and the free dialogues on the rapidly changing dynamics of the bi-polar world were an invigorating blend. Instantly, the campus provided the world view so required for building sound perspectives. A central university located in Delhi has double advantage which the JNU capitalised in favour of its students. The introduction it provides to people who matter in public policy or to premier institutions across the globe is unrivalled. The debates post supper in the hostel common rooms were stimulating- The Soviets in Afghanistan, the rise of the Ayatollahs, the churning in Eastern Europe, the rise of the right wing in Britain, Falklands, The LTTE, the assassination of Smt Gandhi, Cuban migrants to the USA and many more. Thread bare discussions sometimes leading to unsavoury physical exchange made the nights pass only too quickly.

IN the biography of any JNU alumnus, elections to the Students Union each year can make a chapter on its own. The bitter sweet contests among the political rivals were held with all the severity and rancour seen in the political world outside. The seed of political consciousness gets nurtured here, in the campus. I felt so then and now I derive the strength from that nurturing.

This association also brought me closer to the Himalayas. We went trekking to the Valley of Flowers, Ladakh and the Rohtang Pass - the exotic few I recall here. We visited the Andaman too; The Cellular Jail gave me a chill down my spine. I wish I was good with water colours and the brush to recapture from my mind picture the sight of MV Harshavardhan being piloted from the Bay of Bengal into the Ganges to reach Hughli Port. We undertook travel by road vertically up Bihar to go to Nepal - all the way enjoying the great warm hospitality of known and unknown Biharis alike.

I remember that I was a member of the quiz team which attended the first televised quiz competition (inter university?). Notwithstanding the debates, discussions and the awareness JNU was providing us, we failed miserably in this contest.

JNU effortlessly builds a global citizen. It softens the rough edges, refines one's academic skills through its interdisciplinary approach and above all opens up the true wide world for you. Can every young man and woman of India be as fortunate as I am for benefiting from this association?

Nirmala Sitaraman, Member, National Executive, BJP, and Former member National Commission for Women

JNU: A TRYST WITH DESTINY

It was in July 2003 that I joined JNU as an M. Phil. student in the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, SSS. After my MA in Sociology from Jamia Millia Islamia, I developed a strong interest in this discipline. I was determined that I should go for higher studies and expand my knowledge on various perspectives of society and contribute something to the society. I had heard about JNU from some of my seniors and friends. I was resolute that if I had to do research then it should be from JNU and nowhere else. I had a gut feeling that I should be part of this esteemed institution where eminent Indian sociologists like Prof. Yogendra Singh, Prof. T.K. Oommen, and many others taught. As if it was destined, I was selected for the M. Phil. programme and began my academic expedition in JNU.

Initially I could not get hostel accommodation. It was due to one of my best friends, Surjitkumar Nameirakpam's hospitality that I stayed in his room in Periyar Hostel as a guest. I would also like to extend my gratitude to his roommate, Karthik for his generosity. Later, I got accommodation in Kaveri Hostel.



There were 35 students in our batch belonging to different parts of the country and also from Nepal and Japan. An interesting feature of our class was that there was this student from Japan who looked very similar to me. My other classmates and even the profs joked that we were brothers lost in the Kumbh Mela.

I am fortunate to be trained by teachers like Prof. M.N. Panini, Prof. Dipankar Gupta, Prof. Anand Kumar and others in the Centre. The opportunities that I got to interact with them and also some prominent sociologists including Prof. Yogendra Singh and Prof. T.K. Oommen have sharpened my sociological imagination. It was indeed a privilege and a learning experience for me to work under Prof. Dipankar Gupta for my dissertation.



Later, I shifted to Brahmaputra Hostel, which is notoriously known as 'Old Age Home'. I enthusiastically enjoyed my JNU days, especially its scenic campus, Ganga Dhaba, Hostel Nights, Khiecha Restaurant at KC, JNUSU elections, Hostel elections, pamphlet culture, 'Moonlight Dance' at KV ground, North East Cultural Night, and 'warden checking' at the wee hours of the morning. During my days at JNU, the most unforgettable thing that I will ever cherish through out my life is the number 615 (Bus route number). I would be the first one among my friends in JNU to make a bus pass every semester. The reason was obvious I needed it to go to Delhi University to meet my 'friend', which was a weekly schedule. It was actually the only lifeline connecting 'two hearts', JNU more precisely Brahmaputra Hostel and DU. Whenever and wherever I see 615, it makes me nostalgic.

Otojit Kshetrimayum, Assistant Professor, School of Social Sciences, Sikkim University

AN INTENSE IDYLL

I remember my years at JNU as an intense idyll. I arrived there in 1989 after three years in Allahabad and a few months in Benares, with an intense hunger for books that had never been appeased in the decayed provincial capitals of learning. After this deprivation, the JNU library with its immaculate collections of Indian, European and American literatures struck me as a treasure-trove, and it was a rare day when, hunting from book to book, I did not lose myself in its stacks.



I should quickly add that my reading did not make me a diligent student at the Centre for Linguistics and English where I had formally enrolled for a degree. Early in my life, I had ceased to have any thoughts of a professional career. I wanted to write. But, more urgently, I wanted to read and daydream about books I could write. I was not much inspired by the academic study of canonical texts, most of which struck me as dull and inimical to the free play of the imagination.

I could play the game examine the formal properties of a text, join the search for social-historical implication, or, in the best post-modernist style,



kill the author only in so far as it allowed me to carry on my dream-life with books. As a reader and aspiring writer I sought to explore a very different kind of mystery: why certain sentences sent shivers down my spine, why a horse standing in the rain in Flaubert's *Sentimental Education* brought on a great melancholy.

JNU seemed a very agreeable setting for these preoccupations. The hilly roads and cool forests made the walled campus seem a world unto itself, insulated from the harshness of Delhi; I was always relieved when, after meandering through an alienated urban landscape, bus no. 615 bus ascended a short sharp incline and turned into the main gate.

The food at the two hostels I stayed in was cheap and good; dinner was often followed by talks by distinguished visitors. I think I considerably advanced my political education through the sharp and bracing exchanges between the Free Thinkers, the SFI and the AISF (a far cry from the later atmosphere of anti-intellectualism enforced by young saffronites). I was also fortunate to have two wonderfully indulgent teachers Meenakshi Mukherjee and GJV Prasad who took a genuinely literary as opposed to the narrowly academic approach to the idiosyncratic and the truant.

I am aware that I don't quite fit the profile of the model student that universities expect their alumni to showcase. But if I feel any debt and gratitude to JNU today it is because the campus allowed me a respite from the anxiety-infested world of work. Postponing the responsibilities of adulthood, it allowed me to read randomly and fantasize about writing for a few years. Day-dreamers are no less essential to civilization than bridge-builders, administrators and business managers, but the place for them shrinks daily in our highly professionalized existence, which has abolished even the age-old convention of childhood; and I can only hope that a student arriving today, or ten years from now, at JNU will find it as congenial a place as I once did to follow his own muse.

Pankaj Mishra, writer

JNU DAYS

When I recall my days in JNU, I feel extremely nostalgic. When I first came to the campus in 1978, I was mesmerized. We would jokingly say it was like Paris, not part of India. The beautiful campus and the English speaking crowd made a good combination. I belong to that phase of JNU history when the JNUSU election meetings were addressed by star speakers like the legendry DPT and Anand Kumar. And also heard those meetings were interventions by Kunwar Vijay Singh and the internationally known Jairus Banaji whom we read subsequently. Activities in JNU in those days also included lots of academic talks, discussions and cultural activities. I have been privileged to see Baba Nagarjun, Kaifi Azmi, Kishori Amonkar and Tariq Ali and many other distinguished guests who visited JNU campus. The overall experience of JNU develops tremendous amount of confidence within.

The other distinguished characteristic of this great institution lies in its community living. JNU is something like a village. That is probably why even now after 20 years of leaving the campus when one hears that someone from JNU background is around, one feels like meeting the person immediately. This is called JNU solidarity; others lampoon it as JNU brotherhood.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of this campus lies in injecting a leftist outlook in its pupils. During JNU days as an activist of anti-SFI organization like FT then and ABVP now, one may have been a critic of the leftist ideology but once out of the campus one has a tendency to defend Marxism and on this count one is as emphatic as any other comrade.

I was a student at the time of the 83 movement and therefore possess great many reminiscence about it. JNU has contributed substantially in shaping my life and out look. I will remain indebted to my alma mater through out my life. I feel proud of being an alumnus of this university.

P.C. Singh, Editor Research, Newslite



JNU'S ATTRACTIONS

I was in India for 7 years as a student during 1998-2004. The last three years of my time I spent in JNU as a Ph.D. student at the Centre of Linguistics. It is considered "the most valuable and impressive years of my life." JNU taught me how to equip myself to be a good student, how to get ready to be a good activist, how to become a good social worker and how to get ready to be a good leader. In 2005, I came to US, which is considered "Melting Pot of Cultures." As of now, it is already four years of staying in US but I feel like I was in JNU, for JNU's ethos is similar to that of US.

Phramaha Ranavi Papol, Ph.D. (Linguistics), Thailand



THE HEADY DAYS...

A three and a half decade rewind transports me back to JNU. The wondrous lanes and bylanes of memories take me to the days of breathing the air of freedom and sharing a multitude of thoughts and ideas. Of going up a learning curve that I didn't know existed. For me, the great leap from Miranda House was like arriving at a new longitude and latitude politically, culturally and intellectually.

Looking back, I know why I am indebted to JNU. The way I think, the way I relate to events, the values I live by, my perspectives and concepts have all been shaped by my four years there. There is still a crowd of memories of great fun and of evolving and growing.



Indeed, the JNU of the 70s was surcharged with fervour and energy. It made all of us believe that we would change the world. Whatever one's political inclination Left, Right or unsure centrist each one of us carried an aura and conviction that India would scale new heights now that we were in JNU!

The campus was always alive. We were passionate about debates and discussions. We heard with rapt attention the galaxy of speakers who congregated frequently at JNU. We weighed one idea against another before drawing our conclusions. The Masters and MPhil programmes were a revelation a far cry from the humdrum curricula and text books that we associated with university education. In JNU it was an exploration of knowledge and new ideas. So, no class could be missed. Each one was vital. We soon learnt that bunking lectures was looked down upon. Attending them was more exciting.

There were many inspiring teachers. A special memory for me is my association with Professor Moonis Raza. He taught me many things but his most important lesson, as far as I am concerned, was that he taught me to love India.

One of the courses he designed left a deep impact on me. As students of Geography we were asked to follow the course of the Sind River from its source in the Amarnath Glacier to when it joined the Jhelum in Srinagar. Our



class spent a month trekking and in the process learnt more social history than any text book could have taught us. When the Class of '72 meets we still relive that experience. For many of us it stands out as one of the most creative and enduring exercises in our lives. As we all say, it could have only happened in JNU.

My most precious memories are also of the friends I made in JNU. I have leaned heavily on these friendships during every crisis. I also met my husband and best friend in JNU. We shared our life journey and together tried to create a world of our own, which in my view reflects the passion and spirit of our alma mater.

Following my university years I started working in the disability sector perhaps not linked to the Geography I studied. But I drew a lot from my JNU experience. In 1985 we set up a facility for people with developmental disabilities in Chennai. Today Vidya Sagar as the centre was later christened stands tall and proud. It is well known for its eclectic approach, passion, energy and a groundswell of ideas and practices. All these have brought about changes in the way people think and deal with disability. Vidya Sagar (VS) always reminds me of the spirit of enquiry and daring I imbibed during my JNU days. Why, at times I refer to VS as JNU by mistake.

In fact, when I was bestowed the Hellen Keller Award in 2002 my citation read:
 "Things standing shall fall,
 But the moving shall ever live."

It said I had taken the words to heart. This has been the underlying philosophy of JNU as well. The writer captured how I carry the spirit of JNU which I cherish and draw strength from.

A Salute and a big Thank You to my alma mater. Ah, those heady days of the 70s...

Poonam Natarajan, Chairperson, National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation & Multiple Disabilities

NOSTALGIA FOR A WHITE ELEPHANT.

The uniqueness of the JNU in late seventies was recognized most eloquently in the comments it often received those days- "an island" or "a white elephant." After all, Hindu mythology knows the existence of only one white elephant! JNU was also one and one only. Different in its ethos, its debate culture-which sometimes manifested itself in incredible incidents like the one in which an intruder instead of receiving a thrashing, had to witness the theoretical debate on the issue of 'what is to be done', with him! Was it right to invite the police of the bourgeois/ bourgeois-landlord/ semi-feudal Indian state to the campus- that was the larger strategic question thrown up by the presence of this character, who was now both in the center and on the periphery of the impromptu mini UGBM around Kamal Shopping complex. His face was a study in perplexed incredulousness. But the JNUites had their own way of doing things. On another occasion, the fact of the health center opening a bit later than usual prompted a theoretician of fourth international to conclude that, the crisis of the ruling classes in India was finally reaching its zenith. After all, he, like most of us was "trained" by 'JNU culture' to put real life experiences in the larger theoretical framework.

One recalls such "amusing" incidents with a sad longing. We the JNUites of the seventies and the early eighties were proud of, and were ridiculed for contesting the JNUSU elections not on the "real" issues of the caste and community of the candidates but on the esoteric questions of this or that interpretation of Marx or Gandhi being more authentic. The 'remote' issues of some part of Asia or Africa were more immediate than the 'really immediate' issues like the variety in mess-food. The press and the politicians duly chided the utopians of "the island" for such transgressions from the norms of the 'mainstream' student politics. Later, even as a faculty member, I continued to enjoy listening to the Presidential debate (which was and is now held in the Jhelum lawns), and it was during one such debate in the early nineties that the 'great difference' between JNU in seventies and JNU now was brought home to me. A question was put to the presidential candidate of the left combine regarding China, and he replied, 'I am an Indian, do not bother



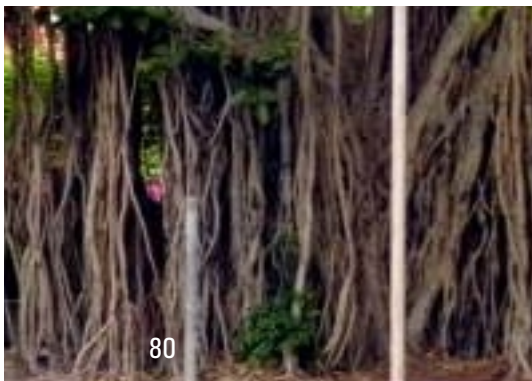
about China, and just talk about India.' His comrades greeted him with thunderous applaud, and I realized JNU had indeed changed. Instead of daring to determine the flow, it, as a community was learning to flow with the tide. It was no more an 'island', but was eager to join the 'mainstream'. In this learning, it was perforce unlearning its own legacy of imagination and innovations. Instead of remaining the unique 'white elephant', it is now very eager to turn into one of numerous black ones. It willingly gave up its uniquely inclusive and at the same time merit sensitive admission policy for the sake of joining the 'mainstream'; and now its equally unique student's election system is being taken away. Such is the logic of events.



We in the seventies and early eighties were proud of and were ridiculed for having a campus where the freshers were pampered instead of being ragged. We were proud of and were ridiculed for having an election system wherein the bullies were not admired as heroes, but proved to be a liability. The leading student organization of those days had to suffer a massive blow to its hegemony when one of its leading members slapped the activist of another organization - there was an impromptu GBM at Nilgiri, and the condemnation was universal. We did not have anything like GS-CASH, but any rare incident of even slightest indecency was bound to invite unmitigated condemnation and rejection. We did not hesitate to express love and hence earned the opprobrium of being a 'free campus'. After all, expression of anger and hatred is normal; the expression of love is not! The relationship between teachers, students and karamcharis was of mutual respect, and the care was taken to nurture and institutionalize this mutuality of respect and recognition of space for the 'other' and the 'different'.



It was this JNU which, in 1977, used to haunt the dreams of a young man of 22 in Gwalior. He had to come here. He had got into the habit of reading a lot and reflecting even more. He was proving an "irritant" to most of his teachers, friends and also to his elder brothers, who wanted him to play his role in the ancestral calling. But, this boy had other ideas, and also the 'daring' to take risk. He had to join JNU. This university was peculiar in as much as it inspired awe, and yet invited him. He was looking forward to the place which inexplicably brought to his mind Tagore's utopia- "where the mind is without fear."



I reached JNU, one afternoon in the summer of 1977, and spent the night in room no.137 of the Ganga hostel (Please don't get any funny ideas, it used to be a boys hostel then, and Ali Jawed was my generous host.)

I was visiting the University of Western Australia (UWA), Perth, in May, 2001. Suman, a JNU alumna and my wife, was pursuing the MBA program there. During one of our touristy walks around the campus we entered the 'Winthrop Hall' an impressive building with beautiful Venetian glass windows which carried the paintings of beautiful women representing consul, courage, wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

According to biblical belief these are five gifts of the Holy Spirit. I could immediately see that allusion. But actually, according to the Bible (Isaiah, XI; 2), these gifts are seven. So, where were the remaining two? The omission was intentional- that was clear, but why?

Winthrop Hall was built by Napier Walter in 1931. For some years, nobody bothered to ask him about the deliberate omission of two of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The artist was finally called upon to explain himself in 1959, and he wrote back to the V.C., "I deliberately excluded two gifts of the Holy spirit, as they had nothing to do with the idea of a university-'piety' and 'fear of God'".

The profound simplicity of the explanation moved me, and I felt the pangs of nostalgia ever more painfully. The nostalgia for the university who lived by that 'omission' even without making a loud statement... the nostalgia for the 'white elephant' - that JNU was...and was generous enough to make me one of its limbs forever....

Purushottam Agrawal, Member, UPSC.

REMEMBERING JNU STUDENT POLITICS

I came to JNU in October, 1970 for Ph D in School of International Studies. We were the first batch of JNU though there was a batch earlier but then it was Indian School of International Studies (ISIS).

There are quite a few landmark events I remember from my stint in JNU. There existed a student's association at the ISIS and we thought that a students union should exist at JNU also. Hence we started the process to form a Students Union at JNU, JNUSU in October 1971. We conceptualized and started the process of General Body Meetings (GBMs). Then there were only four schools, School of International Studies, School of Life Sciences, School of Social Sciences and School of Languages. It was an effort and a process to build a democratic student's movement and JNU was its beginning.

Another was the New Admission Policy of JNU. From 1971 to 1973, we struggled for the new admission policy which ultimately took into consideration socio-economic disadvantage points, regional deprivation points, etc. The structure of the admission process was also changed to facilitate students from all regions of the country and strata of the society to come to JNU to make it a National University in true sense.

The first few years were very productive at JNU. They were productive for all of us. Students were involved in new ethos which were being set at that time in the University which was conceptually very new at that time. Students were part of the JNUSU in the sense that they built it. The concept of a University which should be accessible for everyone was coming true.

There are abiding memories. Election campaigns have been such moments. A lot of debate and discussion used to happen and every one enjoyed them. JNU used to be known for lively debates and discussion since its beginning. One such moment was when we first organised a political protest at Sapru House against the visiting British Prime Minister against apartheid. I remember that was first such protest by JNU students and many senior scholars from Delhi University told, "You have woken up the dead". That was a moment which I still remember.

JNU has a tradition of political activism and JNUSU has been a focus of that activism. JNU politics has always been driven by certain degree of idealism. It has been socially sensitive and centred around issues which have social significance. It has never been in the isolation or kind of ivory tower politics. JNU supported the railway strike; it struggled very hard against emergency. So it's always been with some idealism and social cause.

If we feel that student politics is different elsewhere in India, we should remember that the kind of student's politics in



different parts of the country is not something which has come from oblivion. These unhealthy trends started showing up from the early 70s in different parts in the university system of the country. The nature of capitalist development and higher education has been such which has led to these trends.

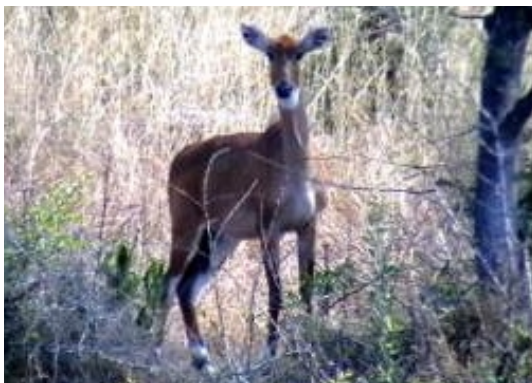
I believe that universities are the places of political socialization. Being politically aware never means that you are not good in studies. Being politically aware, taking up politics and being good at studies all could go together because if you are serious as a student then only you become serious at politics.

JNU is a university which has reputation of good academic centre, which has democratic environment; every one can work in activism and study together without any loss to any part. I believe this reputation and confidence should be built upon.

Prakash Karat, General Secretary, CPI (M)

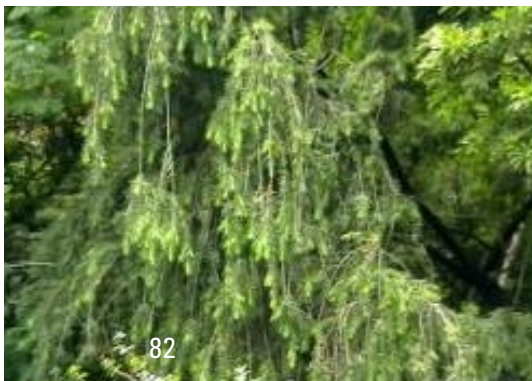
DOWN THE MEMORY LANE: SNIPPETS OF LIFE AT JNU

I was at JNU between 1990 and 1995, first as an MA and then an M.Phil student at the CSSS. Those were years that have been long-forgotten, yet evergreen in memory, when I lost my dear father and gained a friend, who was later to become my husband, when I embarked on a journey of discovery and found myself completely transformed, when learning meant more than what the classroom offered, when the true spirit of inquiry overcame the most timid of us all.



There were the typical JNU experiences. The chats and games that one played in classes, the long hours of discussions on anything under the sun over cups of '*chai*' at Gopalan's or Francis' or any other canteen, the open-book examination shock that Prof. Pathak offered us, the JNUSU elections mania that overtook everything else, the protests that I, a day scholar, always made that the night life of JNU was biased against the day scholars, the hostel nights which were such fun filled moments, the library which saw more of action at its attached canteen and Dholpur House than inside, the endless concerns with the world and its problems and the supreme confidence of youth that revolution was just around the corner, the stress of getting one's dissertation submitted on time each of them and many more flicker through my mind as I think of JNU. And yet, in this piece I would like to dwell on only a few experiences that were, to me, a turning point in my thinking and life.

My first memory of JNU is of walking in for my registration in July, 1990. I sought directions to the counter from a young man, who was most helpful. He turned out to be my classmate, who had just registered for MA at CSSS. Little was I to know that he would be the person with whom I would have my deepest differences, longest arguments and closest friendship. Later, I was to find in him the husband who is now my friend, philosopher and guide,



not to mention a critic, who unhesitatingly pulls me to the ground when I seem to be losing balance in life. JNU today knows him as Vivek Kumar, Associate Professor at CSSS.

1990 was the year when the Government had accepted the Mandal Commission's recommendations. It saw a frenzy of protests by anti-reservationists throughout Delhi, with the complete support of the media. The voices of the pro-reservationists had been drowned in this cacophony of protests. I remember addressing a gathering of students, where I fervently made an appeal against reservations on the grounds of 'merit'. Born and brought up in a middle class, upper caste family, having lived only in cities, I had no idea of the ugly side of caste or the disadvantages it entails to those who bore its brunt everyday. I was arrogant enough to believe that 'merit' was the outcome of individual abilities and hard work and had nothing to do with the cultural capital that one was born with. Today, thinking of this incident, I am amused at my own ignorance and relieved that I have at least not continued in that same vein. Such are the foibles of youth!

During this period, Mr. Sharad Yadav, then Union Minister for Textiles and Food Processing Industries, was invited to speak on the Government's position at the SSS Auditorium. Mr. Yadav was not allowed to speak and was constantly out-shouted by the pro-reservationists. For the first time perhaps, JNU was split along caste lines with the divisions between pro- and anti-reservationists being along caste lines. Everybody was required to choose his or her side.

For the first time, I found myself questioning my own beliefs, identity, prejudices that I had no idea existed in me, meaning of privilege, and where I stood on such issues. It was a dialogue that tore me apart and yet strangely shaped me. It was a dialogue made possible by the subsequent arguments with my Professors and friends and the various views that I was subjected to. I am glad that I chose well in supporting the pro-reservationist side, during those days. My own subsequent career as a bureaucrat, during which I have had the opportunity to meet almost all sections of society, has only reinforced that choice.

It is this meeting of minds and cultures, leading to an internal dialogue with oneself, that JNU promotes that really stand out for me as a unique experience of JNU. This has often led to a union of hearts also, resulting in conventionally unlikely marriages that have defied traditions and necessities of convenience. I am sure that more such unions have taken place since we ceased to be students at JNU. To that extent, there is much that can be learnt in these days of divisions in India. JNU captured the diversities of India, wove them into a tapestry of Unity which was in a style of its own and promoted a truly secular, forward-looking India, unburdened by the past, seeking to promote the Constitutional vision of a truly democratic India, assuring to all her citizens Equality, Liberty and Fraternity. That is truly the JNU experience – a unique gift to all those who come into its fold and a beacon light, as it were, for the nation. Three Cheers to JNU for this unique experience!

R. Jaya, IAS, Director of Handlooms and Textiles, Tamil Nadu

DREAMS OF REVOLUTIONS

I joined JNU in 1971 as an M. Phil student at the School of International Studies (SIS). And after a two-year hiatus in Paris for fieldwork, again came back here to work on my PhD thesis. JNU opened a whole new India to me as I saw it through the different intellectual, political and cultural activities on campus, and met students from all across the country. National and international seminars, debates among students and the friendships forged, all helped me grow as a person and made the days spent in JNU lively and memorable. The continual conversations between students were both intellectually and emotionally rewarding. As students we used to write for newspapers and academic journals and some of us were writing books too!

Our teachers were extremely dedicated to the institution and students. This was the time when the University was still in its infancy and the facilities were scarce. But, there was a sense of mission to build a very good university and it was our dream to eventually bring about radical social transformation in India towards an egalitarian and just society. Most



of us, like all typical young men and women, also dreamt of bringing about a revolution in India and the world. That is why, there would be continued debates related to intricacies of revolution among Left-leaning students in hostels and classrooms. In 1972, I was once elected as Student Councillor from SIS. Though the electoral contest I enjoyed the most was the one between Anand Kumar and Prakash Karat for the post of the President of the Student Union in 1973.



Ideas fostered during one's student days are always tinged with a shade of romance and the real world inevitably jars against that. As I add on years, I have only matured with each of my experiences, whatever their flavour. I haven't grown cynical and continue to be an idealist. I am working tirelessly to build sound educational institutions in India. I would suggest to the students of JNU that they take their work seriously and attempt to contribute to the larger social good. Life is only meaningful when we choose to do something higher, nobler and bigger! Let them try and better their preceding generation in each and every walk of life so that JNU attains an enviable reputation among all universities in the world.

Rajen Harshe, Vice Chancellor, University of Allahabad

A SHORT MEMOIR

18 July, 1985: I joined my M.A. Programme in Geography at CSRD. I was allotted Ganga Hostel, room no. 201.

June first week to July first week, 1986: I visited Jammu and Kashmir: Ladakh, Kashmir Valley, Srinagar, Dal Lake, Shalimar and Nishat Gardens, Zozila Pass and Rangdum Glacier.

It was a new beginning in my life; we were 26 students and three teachers from JNU. This was one of the compulsory programmes, a part of course work, a physiographic survey of Jammu and Kashmir. At that time this area was very peaceful and there was no disturbance or terrorism at all.

December, 1986: All of us M.A. students and 3 teachers visited an Eastern Uttar Pradesh village, Bhirari. We stayed there 20 days; this was also part of my course work, a socio-economic survey of that particular village.

August 1987: I completed my M.A. I was selected in the M. Phil Programme in Political Geography, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Diplomacy, SIS. I was allotted Periyar Hostel, room no. 306.

627, August, 1987: I worked as research assistant for 21 days in a joint project of JNU and Hiroshima University, Japan, at Abhaneri village near Bandi Kudi, Jaipur District. The theme of that project was the socio-economic rural transformation in Rajasthan, a case study of Abhaneri village. Meanwhile, I was selected by the Central Police Organization as Deputy Superintendent in the Central Reserve Police but I did not join.

1989: I completed my M. Phil. I was admitted into the Ph.D programme at same centre/ SIS.



1990-92: I appeared for civil service examination, did not qualify.

June, 1992: I was one of the relief team members from JNU; we visited Kumbher, Bharatpur (Rajasthan), area affected by atrocities on dalits.

Oct, 1992: I was one of the relief team members from JNU who visited Uttarkashi region and provided relief package for earthquake victims.

1993: I contested for JNUSU President from Chhatra Janta Dal.

I was appointed by the then Janta Dal President S.R. Bommai as National General Secretary Incharge of Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka.

21st July, 1994: I submitted my Ph.D. thesis.

For almost one year I worked in Jharkhand for tribal education. I am a founding member of a college, **Chetna Maha Vidhayala**, which is dedicated to the rural students of that area, at Sahraj village, Govindpur Block, District Dhanbad, Jharkhand. This institute was inspired by the renowned social reformer Archarya Ram Murti and other social workers of that area.

6th September, 1995: I was awarded my PhD degree and I left JNU Campus after 10 years one month, and 19 days at this premier institute of higher education of the Asian continent.

Dr. Rajendra Parihar, Assistant Professor, JNVU, Jodhpur (Rajasthan)

EXPERT BUZZ

As G. Parthasarthy said once, the business of a University is not merely to teach. The job of a University is to mould the overall personality of the student. Classroom teaching is only one part of the process. JNU is a different kind of a dream. We must think beyond the classroom. His words have come true today. JNU is presently the premier University of India because it has followed the method of dialogue, of equality between students and teachers and of academic excellence. An average JNU student reads more than even the teachers of others universities for her/his term papers and assignments.

Another thing worth noting is that all our Professors were the best experts of their fields they were all well renowned for their work in their respective fields. I feel that while I was in JNU, it was an entirely different era. It was an era of great tumult in the world and JNU participated in all its capacity in that buzz. People would stand against oppression in any part of the world and voice their dissent.

Ramesh Dixit

MY YEARS AT JNU

I came to JNU in 1973 for M Phil in Political Science after completing my MA from Banaras Hindu University. Coming from a small town to Delhi and adjusting to its life and environment was not very easy task. You lose your friends; you lose people you knew for long lime. The feeling of security, coziness and warmth which one feels in a small town was totally absent in Delhi. Delhi always tries to push you out in the beginning; it's a sea where waves of competition, arrogance, insecurity push you back all the times. But JNU has its own character and nature. We had very supportive group of girls and boys who took good care of new students. Teachers were very supportive and we never felt neglected. Language was my biggest drawback. I came from a Hindi speaking background and my English was not good at all. This demanded a lot of hard work. I remember Prof. Bhambhri laughing aloud in the interview when I asked the board to permit me to reply in Hindi and saying, "Yes, you can. Hindi is our national language." I was confident that whatever they were asking me, I knew, but language was the barrier. I replied all questions in Hindi and got through.

The support of our senior students was the biggest of our asset at JNU. I remember Usha Menon, a Science Policy student, who took me around the library. In BHU, the library was something which did not have a space in our campus lives, but JNU library was fascinating! I saw people spending a good share of their time in the library which was



something new for me. I started spending a good amount of time there, which was even my necessity. There were people like Nagesh Hegde, Jayaram Panda, Yogesh Sharma, Chaya, all of them were very supportive. Our teachers like Prof. Sheshadri, Prof. Bhambhri, Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed, Prof. Kaviraj always promoted questions and doubts. Even if someone was asking a very stupid question, they never stopped him/her.

This whole conducive environment leads to political culture of the campus, which also develops your personality. I was already a counsellor at BHU but I never attended a meeting there except for once when there was some voting. My brother was already active in JNU politics, so it was natural for me to get involved in the political life of the campus. It gives you ideological rooting. You have to get into it to find your answers, to discover your moorings. That is the best way of political socialisation. JNU gave us an opportunity to share platforms with everyone, to work together for our campaigns and there was no distinction at all between girls and boys. This all was unique and fascinating for me. These were also the times when this political culture was being built at JNU, which till persists. Making posters, pasting them all by ourselves was all a creative process.



It was intense and has become part of our lives. You get emotional about politics in the sense of commitments and realisation. JNU is not just academically, socially and politically significant in my life but personally too. I met Sudhindra here. He was part of a study circle where we first knew each other. Later we became part of many political activities and this commitment to our values and activism became the basis of our relationship. The emergency made it stronger. Just after emergency we got married in a GBM like gathering at Rajnarayanji's house. It was exciting as all our friends were present.



During the emergency JNU was an integral part of protests against it. We started interacting with the outside world politically. The police came to the campus and most of the politically active students were arrested. After a few days, I was there in Ganga hostel with Sudhindra. The UP police came and took both of us to a police station. We were not told anything, why and where we were. After a few hours I was sent back to the hostel. I later came to know that our Provost Prof. Moonis Raza called the police authorities that they can do whatever they want to Sudhindra but should leave the girl. Our administration and Professors used to care for us those days. I was sent back and Sudhindra was transferred to UP jail later and he was in jail for the whole period of the emergency. I admit that I was involved with George Fernandes' anti-emergency activities. We brought out posters, pamphlets and were also involved in some violent activities. Now I realise and condemn all kind of violence because the ultimate sufferers of any kind of violence are women.



My life of activism started here in JNU through student politics and later with activities centred on women. We used to think that politics and

activism is the only option for us. I was already a member of Mahila Dakshta Samiti of Pramila Dandwate. I remember Pramila Dandwate calling our hostel one morning and asking us to immediately reach at some place in Karol Bagh, where she took us inside a house. And all of us were shocked. There was a dead body of a woman on a bed, which was charred. She was burnt alive for dowry. Most of us had never seen a dead body before and seeing such a scene was dreadful for us. Pramilaji asked us to sit around the bed in dharna. Later, the police came and a case was registered. That was the time when dowry deaths started in Delhi and at other places. That incident changed the track of life. I left my Ph D to study these cases and actively work against dowry deaths. I joined Ph D again after few years to complete it. We registered a total of 54 cases against such dowry deaths. I studied nine of them which made the basis for my book, *Brides are not for Burning*.

JNU has made us what we are. I feel that the time to give back has come for the JNU alumni. We all should give back according to our competence.

Ranjana Kumari, Director, Centre for Social Research and President, Women Power Connect

जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय एवं विकलांग आन्दोलन

पटना कॉलेज, पटना में पढाई के अपने शुरूआती दिनों (1984–89) से ही मैं जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय को बड़े ही हसरत भरी नजरों से देखा करता था। लेकिन अपनी शारीरिक एवं आर्थिक विकलांगता की वजह से मन में एक संक्षय बरबस बना रहता था कि मैं दिल्ली आकर पढाई कर सकूँगा कि नहीं? फिर दिल्ली के खर्चे कैसे पूरे होंगे? खैर ज० ने० वि० की प्रवेश परीक्षा पास की एवं दिल्ली आ गया। कैम्पस में प्रवेश करते ही लगा कि मैं शायद किसी विदेशी धरती पर आ गया हूँ। यहाँ का उन्मुक्त वातावरण, शैक्षिक माहौल, छात्रावासों में आयोजित सभाएँ मुझे एक नया अनुभव प्रदान कर रहे थे। छात्रों के मन में सामाजिक सहभागिता एवं सामाजिक न्याय पर आधारित एक नये राष्ट्र कि संकल्पना मेरे अन्दर भी एक नई शक्ति का संचार कर रहे थे। मुझे यहाँ जो बात सबसे ज्यादा परेशान कर रही थी कि देश के इस अग्रणी विश्वविद्यालय में विकलांगों के लिए कुछ विशेष सुविधा नहीं थी। विश्वविद्यालय समुदाय विकलांगों के अधिकारों के प्रति पूरी तरह उदासीन था। हम लोगो ने धीरे-धीरे पोस्टर एवं पर्चों के माध्यम से ज० ने० वि० समुदाय का ध्यान विकलांगों की समस्याओं की ओर आकृष्ट करना शुरू किया। छात्रों, कर्मचारियों एवं शिक्षकों के संयुक्त प्रयास से ज० एन० यू० डिसएबुल्ट पर्सन्स एसोसियेशन नामक संस्था का गठन 1993–94 में किया गया जिसने न केवल विश्वविद्यालय के अन्दर बल्कि राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर विकलांगों की दशा में सुधार हेतु नीति निर्धारण में एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका अदा की इस आन्दोलन को खड़ा करने में प्रारम्भिक स्तर पर एल० कनिअध्यन, होशियार सिंह, दिलीप सरकार, महिपाल सिंह शैलेन्द्र ठाकुर, एस० एस० मैगा आशुतोष ठाकुर जैसे छात्रों, कर्मचारियों एवं शिक्षकों ने बहुत ही उल्लेखनीय योगदान दिया। उन्हीं दिनों मैं प्रो० आनन्द कुमार के सम्पर्क में आया जिनसे मैंने न केवल समाजशास्त्र ही पढा बल्कि समाज के गूढ़ रहस्यों एवं आन्दोलनों को भी समझने का प्रयास किया। ज० ने० वि० में चलने वाले विकलांग आन्दोलन को एक दिशा देने में हमेशा उन्होने हम लोगो का मार्गदर्शन किया। 1999 में मैंने अपना पी० एच० डी० का शोध कार्य भी उनके ही मार्गदर्शन में पूरा किया। अगर आज मैं अपने जिंदगी में थोडा सा कुछ कर पाया हूँ तो उसमे उनके आशीर्वाद एवं मार्ग दर्शन का योगदान अप्रतिय रहा है।

धीरे-धीरे विश्वविद्यालय में विकलांग आन्दोलन अपनी रफ्तार पकडने लगा। इसी आन्दोलन की माँग पर प्रशासन ने 9 विकलांग पी० सी० आ० ऑपरेटरो की नियुक्ति दैनिक वेतनभोगी कर्मचारियों के रूप में की। कई साल पश्चात् जब उनकी नौकरी पक्की नहीं हुई तो हम लोगो ने कुलपति कार्यालय के समक्ष एक रीले हंगर स्ट्राइक का आयोजन मार्च 1999 में किया जो तकरीबन 19 दिनों तक चली। ज० ने० वि० कोर्ट के सदस्य एवं सा० श्री मणिशंकर अय्यर ने हस्तक्षेप किया जिसके फलस्वरूप कुलपति प्रो० आशीष दत्ता को उनकी नौकरी पक्की करने का आश्वासन देना पडा। इस हंगर स्ट्राइक का प्रभाव ज० ने० वि० समुदाय पर जबरदस्त पड़ एवं कैम्पस में विकलांगों की समस्याओं को समझने का एक सार्थक प्रयास शुरू हुआ।

विश्वविद्यालय परिसर को डिसएबुल्ट फ्रेंडली बनाने के क्रम में संरचनात्मक एवं मानसिक अवरोधों को हटाने का काम भी



अपनी रफ्तार पकड़ रहा था आज ज० ने० वि० समुदाय के सभी सदस्य गर्व से दावा कर सकते हैं कि वहा की सभी इमारत डिसएबुल्ड फ्रेंडली बन चुकी हैं। स्कूलों, पुस्तकालय, छात्रावासों एवं सेमीनार हॉल आदि में रैंपस बन चुके हैं जिससे हमारे ऐसे भाई-बहन जो व्हीलचेयर से चलते हैं, सुगमतापूर्वक अन्दर प्रवेश कर सकते हैं। पुस्तकालय में भी हेलन किलर यूनिट की स्थापना की गई है जिसमें हमारे नेत्रहीन मित्र कम्प्यूटर की सुविधा ले रहे हैं। ज० ने० वि० में विकलांग व्यक्तियों की नियुक्ति फैकल्टी के रूप में भी हुई है। नामांकन में भी 3% आरक्षण को पूरा किया जा रहा है। इसके अलावा प्रशासनिक स्तर पर की जा रही नियुक्तियों में भी विकलांगों के आरक्षण का ध्यान रखा जा रहा है। आज जब मैं ज० ने० वि० में व्यतीत उन पिछले नौ वर्षों (1989-98) को याद करता हूँ तो आत्मसंतोष होता है कि हमने विकलांग आन्दोलन का जो एक छोटा सा पौधा लगाया था वह आने वाले वर्षों में हमारे विकलांग भाई-बहनों को निरन्तर छाया प्रदान करता रहेगा।

इसी आशा एवं विश्वास के साथ इत्यतम
डा० राकेश रमन झा



MY DAYS IN JNU

I joined JNU in 1980 to pursue M.A. in modern Indian history in the Centre for Historical Studies. I was bewildered and overwhelmed by the expanse of the University. It was for the first time I had left my native place, Munger in Bihar, to study anywhere outside my province. I was very conscious and apprehensive as to how this new world would open up for me. I did not have any idea about JNU as there was hardly anyone from my place who would have known the University and told us stories about it. I say this in the context that there were many students from my place who had studied in Aligarh Muslim University and we frequently used to hear stories, 'AMU mein aisa hota hai waisa hota hai' but not a word about JNU. It was perhaps on the basis of some vague idea and fluke that I applied for M.A. and fortunately got admission into one of the toughest centers. Thus began my journey in JNU.



Today, when I have already logged in twenty years of university teaching, I frequently look back my days in JNU with a sense of pride and think that had I not been to JNU, I would not have been what I am today. In this context I always recall a quotable quote of Abraham Lincoln, who once said about his mother, 'whatever I am and whatever I hope to be, I owe it to my angel mother', and paraphrase it, 'whatever I am and whatever I hope to be I owe it JNU.' I say it not because I loved my mother any less. I have always thought it to myself that I had the privilege of being nurtured by two mothers, my biological mother who gave birth and sustained me in life and second, JNU, which gave me academic birth and nurtured me to whatever I am today. I consider myself twice-born.



In JNU I learnt plenty of things in class rooms. Doyens among historians were teaching us to make sense of history as a discipline. The burden of completing tutorials in time and then worrying about grades filled my days and nights too. I had to put up with an additional struggle with English language in terms of day-to-day conversation as well as performing academic tasks such as writing tutorials and making presentations. My friends gave me great courage to sustain the rigour of CHS as did the English-Urdu dictionary, which I always carried in the cotton sling bag, which is pejoratively described as 'Jhola.'

However, in JNU the learning process was not confined to class rooms alone as I learnt much more outside them. The post-dinner public meetings in mess halls, organized by various students' formations were great learning experience. A large number of issues of public concerns were discussed. The question-answer sessions used to be scintillating. With all this began a process of sensitization in regard to the relevance of life ideologically and politically. Increasingly I was drawn to a socialist formation of students, called Students for Democratic Socialism (SDS), which later on was rechristened as Samata Yuvjan Sabha (SYS). With this I came close to the Gandhian world-view about life, which gave me conviction to stand for those who were deprived of dignity in life. The ideological underpinnings of Ram Manohar Lohiya and Jai Prakash Narayan too kept on opening several windows in order to understand the nature of iniquitous nature of Indian society and possibilities of putting up a struggle to seek justice for those who were on the margins. The conviction that I developed in JNU in regard to these issues still holds grounds for me as I draw a lot of courage from it, even today.

The hostel life was yet another realm to learn about India's proverbial diversity in myriad ways. For instance there were students from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Assam, Mizoram, Manipur and the Punjab. I became familiar with linguistic intonation of various languages, spoken by students from all these places. It was in JNU that I learnt the skills of social and cultural negotiations. I was able to realize that India was just not Bihar as all these places from where students had come represented the truly diverse picture of India. This cultural experience helped me develop a pan-Indian perspective in dealing with many relevant questions.

I will end with the same sentiment I started with life experience JNU was so overwhelming that it overshadowed the experiences of school and college days. After leaving the campus in 1991 there were innumerable occasions when I visited the campus to enjoy a trip down the memory lane. However there have been many occasions when I have been invited as a speaker in post-dinner meetings, I invoke the name JNU in following words, 'I cherish visiting only two places on the earth is Munger, my natural *janambhumi* and another is JNU, my academic and political *Janambhumī*'. I sincerely mean it.

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BLISS OF DAWN AND GLOOM OF DUSK

What are the ways in which one remembers (and narrates) one's association with the world one lived in and lived by? Is it possible to describe a world one was so much a part of? The following paragraphs are an attempt to evaluate that association in as objective a manner as possible. It is story of bliss and gloom and the two cannot really be separated. The bliss first.

An important estimate of how JNU contributed to our lives can be made by drawing a spectrum with three crucial points of demarcation on it: the point at which people entered JNU and the baggage of expectations with which they did so; the totality of their stay in JNU and what it did to them; and life thereafter. The individual trajectories would of course vary. But on the scale of different types of trajectories, there is one that is quite representative.

At the time of entering JNU many of us came with reasonably middle-class expectations. We had been initiated and socialized into believing that life was another name for career (or the other way round) and, having got the opportunity to make it to JNU, we had to excel either as successful bureaucrats or teachers or journalists (the three areas that have



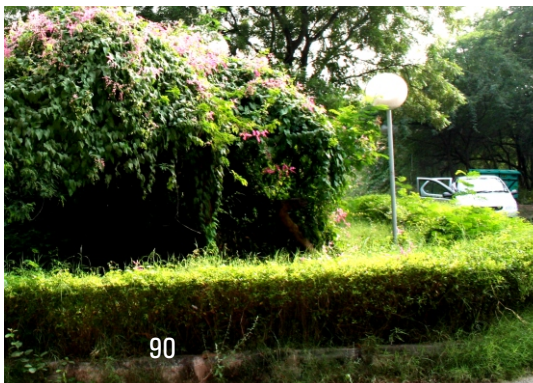
consumed JNU products in a big way and are the richer for that!). JNU's job was to enable us to excel. But dramatic changes started happening once JNU took us into its fold. It was our stay in JNU (ranging from a minimum of five years to a maximum of possibly ten years or more) that transformed not just those aspirations but the very *nature* of those aspirations. Some continued to want to become bureaucrats, or teachers or journalists, but the adjective 'successful' was modified to include 'good, conscientious and responsible'. There was something in the air of JNU that told us that fulfilling a social obligation was a better way to excel than was earning individual brownie points. Didn't we have to prove that we were products of JNU? How else to justify and live up to the stamp that we all wore (and still do) on our sleeves?



Then the time came to leave JNU and get on with life outside. Leaving JNU, living in the 'real' world outside, and being sucked in by the large establishments (of bureaucracy, media and academia) often had the elastic effect on some of us. Our middle-class elastic bands had been stretched to the maximum in (and by) JNU. Once JNU released its hold, the normal trajectory of the elastic was to go back to its original shape and size. But did it? I would like to believe that it did not. Admittedly JNU-socialization did taper off a little once we stepped outside, but it still continued to assert itself in many ways in many of our actions and attitudes. I may call it the *M-R-M* (middle class- radical - middle class) model of transformation. We entered JNU as middle class, got radicalized during our stay and then went back to our middle class ways of living life. Yet the *M* was not quite the same as *M*. It was (and is) destined to flourish under the shadow of JNU-socialization. There were of course other trajectories available. Some carried the pre-JNU baggage all the way without shedding too much of it. Some shed it *completely*, acquired the JNU-baggage and lived *in* it (and not just with it) for the rest of their lives. These are all interesting (and also disturbing) stories and need to be told in detail from an anthropological perspective.



And now the gloom. What was it about the JNU-socialization that made us confront socially uncomfortable questions? In large parts it was the texture of student politics on campus. Life in JNU was not meant to be an innocent and neutral pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge gained had to play its role in the process of social transformation. 'Students in India have only tried to interpret the world; the point is to change it' seemed to be our (not so) unstated motto. But nobody was clear about precisely *what* to do in order to contribute to transformation. The dominant political climate in our student life identified two major obstacles: tradition and inheritance on the one hand, and State on the other. Inheritance also meant family. A painful reality was that for survival almost *all* of us were dependent on either of these two major institutions, identified as obstacles. We lived either on money supplied by the family or scholarship provided by the State. How to fight these obstacles with conviction, genuineness and honesty while continuing to proceed ahead in life? Above all how to handle these dilemmas



and predicaments? These were uncomfortable questions and they turned us into deeply disturbed and tormented souls.

How did we cope with these unresolved and irresolvable dilemmas? The range of individual responses varied enormously. But I do seriously believe that some of the superficial trivialisms, retreat into alcoholism, eccentricities of various kinds and at various levels and the neurosis that we witnessed and experienced were not isolated and independent phenomena. They were all rooted in our inability to handle these disconcerting questions. In extreme cases there were suicides. It is perhaps needless to mention that these things happened to some of the brightest of minds, and warmest of hearts.

The actual crisis would have been deeper were it not for the fact that, at the same time, there were our teachers, fellow students, karamcharies, library, hostels, canteens, dhabas, mess, student politics, love and romance, and above all JNU, all combining together to provide joy, meaning, happiness and most importantly, that rare gift that has really eluded the modern, rational, atomized man 'Pastoral Care'. In other words, we may have been tormented, but we were also loved, cared for, pampered and had our fare share of 'pastoral care'. That was enough to sustain us. We were a community and lived like one. Any short supply from one source was immediately compensated for from another.

There used to be semi-serious joke circulating in my times (1979-88): We at JNU possessed all the characteristics of a nation: will, memory, consciousness and also a *selective amnesia*. So many of us forgot where we had come from and only remembered where we *were*. That made us into a nation. I believe the nation is still there. But with so many JNUites spread all over, we have now become a diasporic nation.

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REMINISCENCES OF JNU

Masala chai from Dhruv's dhaba, momos from Kichau's, potato-rich food in the mess, exhilarating arguments in class, where the professor was often just a spectator, presidential speeches (where issues in Bosnia got precedence over the lack of hostel rooms for students), the strange lapses into religiosity in the bastion of Marxism during Navratri ("pujo" to the predominantly Bengali community that formed my batch), welcome parties for juniors where the main liquid refreshment was rum punch JNU was all this and more. Much more.

I came to JNU from Trivandrum in 1993, and left it some time in 1997 (and yes, clichéd as it is, gaining my Masters degree, and losing my bachelorhood status), but it seems JNU has never left me. I am a product of JNU. No questions asked. I might be in the corporate world now (after some futile attempts at teaching in a few Delhi University colleges), but the biggest kick I still get is after a training session (yes, on "Computer Systems Validation" oh, what a fall from grace!) when someone comes and remarks, "Sir, heard you were at JNU? Well, it shows."

In the beginning, it was a culture shock. Boys and girls could sit on the same bench (wonder what my undergraduate teacher from Trivandrum would have said about that); courses where you prescribed your own texts; decided whether you wanted to write two term papers and an end semester exam, or one term paper, a mid semester exam and an end semester exam, or more amazing still, sit for a couple of lectures and then decide whether you wanted to do that course or not! Slowly, but surely I learnt that I had to shed my conventional approach to learning. In time, JNU taught me to shed my conventional approach to life and living as well.

So here is a poem as part of this prose piece:

JNU was poetry

Gutter-rhymes, half formed, refined

Of professors, words and alphabets

Floating, deepening, enriching, confusing



Neurotic and self obsessed
Words that I am spending a lifetime unraveling
Ordering, and structuring in experiences
That refuse to conform.

JNU was poetry
Endless cups of tea
Swimming in nostalgia
Rich, strong, sweet
Of deep woods and night skies
And libraries of non-cyber reality
Back-bending rows of books
Of faded words gone insane



JNU was poetry
Politics and posters
Of comedy and tragedy
Of questions that confused
Of answers that resonated
In unrest and fervour
In a sentiment, in a passion
In an alternate universe called JNU
Sankar Kalyan, CLE, now in TCS



MAY IS THE CRUELLEST MONTH...

May is the cruellest month (and not because it's when the Indian summer peaks) - entrance-exam-time for most undergraduates seeking admission to postgraduate courses I presume that hasn't changed much over the last decade or so. I took one such after completing my undergraduate course in English from Calcutta University in the late nineties the JNU entrance examination. It was a big thing in those days to take this examination in Kolkata (and possibly all over India) and every candidate hoped that s/he would get through to the preferred course (and I hope things haven't changed much here either!). I was no exception, though not quite hopeful! But a telegram (yes, those were pre-sms/e-mail days!) - sent by the registrar of Jawaharlal Nehru University, kind of changed my life. I packed my bags, put an end to the confusion at home about my 'future' (all parents suffer from this ailment!) and set out for Delhi to join the MA course in English Literature at the Centre of Linguistics and English, JNU. I have to confess here that I didn't become very popular amongst my extended family by my choice of English over Medicine. But that's a separate story.



It so turned out that the stay extended beyond just a two year MA to another two years of an M Phil. The four years I spent at the university changed me in many ways not just in my readings of literature but the very way I looked at life. The academic environment gave a young student a lot of freedom to experiment and try out different things and learn and talk about various subjects with varying points of views. What I liked about

JNU in my very first few days was that it was a place where one could just be with differing ideologies and sets of beliefs political or otherwise. Student life in JNU was never limited to discussions in the classroom but I'd say the debates necessarily transported themselves to the cafeterias and the ubiquitous dhabas in the campus. And while I had joined my MA class with an assumption that probably I'd be doing more of the Elizabethans and the Victorians with a dash of the Modernists, in the very first semester my bookshelf had strange books for a literature student from Fanon to Popper to Durkheim to Barthes from Kancha Ilaiah to Partha Chatterjee. Some of it though was unbridled enthusiasm of an energetic scholar/academic in the making but quite a bit of it was because JNU encouraged its students to go that extra yard and look beyond the obvious it certainly was the only university that encouraged interdisciplinary work.

The university also allowed me to get to know my India a little better than I had known from my Kolkata upbringing. JNU has had a truly national character (somewhat international as well, I had classmates from Oman, Iran, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and that too in a rather small class of 16) bright young scholars and students flocked to this premier institute of learning in India thereby making the campus varied and colourful. JNU was a true melting pot where languages and traditions met and helped the different Indias come together to become one nation.

It's been years now since I left the university but wherever my profession has taken me, I have carried a bit of JNU with me. As a publishing professional I have to admit that the years I spent in JNU, discussing books and ideas with my friends and teachers, have come a long way in creating a strong list of titles for my company. The university and especially my peers during my four year stay in JNU in many ways led me to many books and writers. Some long lost, some forgotten. Choosing publishing as a career was as accidental as me joining JNU and am really grateful that such accidents happened to me not once but twice over! As an alumnus of JNU I feel proud and hope that the university goes from strength to strength.

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MY JNU DAYS A LIFETIME OF LEARNING

The prime years of one's life, the early days of youth and new learning are the most significant. I realize it now after two decades when I look over my shoulder and see myself in a campus of pink, yellow and white bougainvillea, rocks that strangely emitted more warmth than heat, and buses that defied all religious logic and were fondly called 666. JNU was a fantastic world that opened up from the inside as well as from the outside. It cocooned me from the outside world, of 'oh god Delhi', and opened up new vistas of learning's that happened a lot more just sipping endless cups of over-boiled tea at the hostel and library dhabas. I am tempted to voice eloquent about how politically illusioned I became...but no, there is a lot more to my life on campus than just that. I learnt that politics was a pot boiler par excellence! You just never needed any other distraction (apart from the occasional classroom attendance) to feel a oneness with this world of humans. As it is famously said isme drama tha, suspense tha, romance tha aur politics bhi! I learnt that politics was all about being human and that anything else was over and above it. I learnt to live by 'Myths' in JNU. My first foray into 'applied semiotics' actually and a lifelong lesson too. JNU was a melody that I am yet to hear outside despite paying hundreds of rupees and standing in long queues to get into auditoriums. I did not realize then that what I heard on the lawns was exquisite voices singing the most delightful folk songs in a dialect that sounds sweeter than anything I have tasted so far. And I had it all for free, the value of which hits me now I cannot bring those days back anymore. Today I realize the value of my teachers, those seminars, those 'free discourses' that I yearn to listen to today and I cannot anymore. The freedom and the cross-disciplinary flirtations are my precious memories of the education.

I am a teacher myself today, and every time I enter a classroom; I try and apply the rules of a teacher-student dynamics that JNU taught me. I carry every bit of the campus into my classroom and feel very proud when I am told that my classes are very interactive. The most important lesson I learnt in JNU was that as a young Indian I must engage with the political process in some way to be able to identify with my country. It taught me humility, (having to carry buckets of water up three floors) and hard work. I saw a mini-nation in JNU and it was a tremendous world of the real and the



make believe. It took me almost five years to get over the campus life and to digest the fact that I was an ordinary citizen, struggling to make my mark in this world. JNU spoilt me into believing that I was special. But today, I believe that JNU was special, very special. Long live my memories and the campus in my mind!

Seema Khanwalkar, Faculty (Semiotics), CEPT University, Ahmedabad

JNU: A VIEW

My aspirations when I joined JNU were definitely not career-oriented. The campus attracted me. In activity, curriculum and ethos, JNU was absolutely inter-disciplinary in nature. It was a University in its true sense. That place changed our personalities. The environment of JNU inspires towards all kinds of goals and aspirations, no matter what you choose to excel in ...



Everyone knew how committed JNUites were to the cause of egalitarianism. Yet, it was completely different feeling that overwhelmed me when I actually entered this campus. As a student of Gorakhpur University, I used to move around in a small group of socially aware and politically active friends. Such students were very few in number. In JNU, however, the whole campus was conscious of what was happening in the world! With different shades of ideology, it was a politically charged and liberal campus. Students' politics was also very different here. There was no space for hooliganism and indecency. I felt that the role of students' politics was to declass all the students. Democracy was actually practiced here... it was all so liberating.

JNU is always in my work. I share the analytical capability that I developed in JNU, with my students and colleagues. I always carry with me what JNU has taught me and it is very helpful.



I don't want to go back. It is good to go down the memory lane once in while but to do so literally, in reality, may damage the emotional image of the place that I have formed over the years. I'm satisfied with my JNU experience. Nothing needs to be added there. You know, while I was in JNU, I hardly ever changed out of my bathroom slippers. Where was the need? Everything was available on campus. Why go out? I remember, to ward-off our boredom, we would board Bus no 666 every evening, after dinner. That bus had a circular route. So after one full round, it would drop you at your hostel. This was our favourite pastime apart from roaming on the ring road all night. JNU was indeed a wonderful place..But once I came out of JNU, I realized that there was a vast reality outside which could not be ignored. As a documentary film-maker, I have traveled a lot, met a lot of suffering. This field requires a strong fascination for life. You grow humble and your ego diminishes as you meet so many people. Once that happens, you become addicted to movement, change and progression. That is why I don't want to go back....

Shahid Jamal, Film Maker



MY YEARS IN JNU

In the 59th year of my life when I look back to recollect memorable periods of my life, I can vouch that, except for minor aberrations, my years (which disappeared like days) at JNU were great; lively both academically and otherwise, debate-full, packed with intensity and bohemian life. These days at JNU determined much of what I would be as an individual, as a researcher and a student of social sciences. I have no qualms in saying that whatever I am today is the outcome of my association with this University for about 3 years and Professor Randhir Singh's classes which I attended 1966 onward.

How could I know that when I was selected to the first batch of JNU (1972, in Centre of North African & West Asian Studies at School of International Studies) I was becoming part of history making at JNU like many other batch-mates. We were part of many firsts at JNU. The first campus of JNU was inaugurated with our inhabiting the Old Campus and later it was our batch which was the first one to check into the New Campus which continues to be the final abode. If I am not much mistaken, it was in 1973 that we entered Periyar Hostel; the first hostel to be opened over there. Incidentally, in those days provision of bulbs and table lamp was the responsibility of the University. I am told that with India's becoming a 'giant economic power' (to use President Bush's words) this facility is no more provided.

While reminiscing about those days, I can only say today, that those were unbelievable times. There were almost no nights. In those days JNU rarely slept. We would return from libraries in Delhi (Sapru House/NMML/National Archives) by 7 in the evening, riding the free shuttle provided by the University. Towering Tiwariji, our *nakhuda* (shuttle driver) was the most sought after person and it was mandatory to keep him in good humour, as on him depended unscheduled pick-ups of persons and goods. The two hours journey (both way) was an intellectual delight as the whole bus would always be involved in some kind of heated theoretical/philosophical debate. No shade of opinion went unrepresented. The journey would seem to be too short.

By 7 in the evening we would be ready for dinner and then would start our day on the campus. We had our own voluntary groups, of course, ideology based. It was not always a gentlemen's debate even in these, so to say, homogenous groups. If we had 10 shades among Socialists, the Maoists had 15, Trotskyites 20, Parliamentary Communists as many. There were innumerable Congressites and Jan Sanghis too. They were allergic to debates but remained awake as spectators lest they were deprived of the intellectual tag. The monotony of debates would be broken with many visits to *dhabas* for tea, omelettes and *paranthas*. Leaflets were an essential part of this life. We lived every moment as passionately. We would be getting ready by 6 in the morning to start another day for lectures and libraries.

I will remember my JNU years for a few other reasons too. It was here that first street theatre of the Hindi belt, *Mukti*, was conceptualized and started performing under the guidance of Srilata Swaminathan, the indomitable theatre luminary who later chose to dedicate her life to work among tribals in Rajasthan. Our first audiences were construction workers (children/women/males) who were raising grand structures of JNU without having access to the very basic amenities of life. Here I learnt the basics of acting and about people's theatre. It continues to be my passion and commitment.

I feel proud that while at JNU I was host to two of the greatest icons of people culture. One was Baba Neaz Haider, great Urdu poet, choreographer, playwright and script-writer. He was homeless in Delhi and his fans would lodge him by turns. I was one of the lucky ones who got this opportunity more than once. Baba would sleep only at a place from where he could see the sky. During winter I had to arrange two quilts and a plastic sheet so that he would not suffer frost while sleeping in the balcony. Now, Baba is no more to demand such a facility from his fans. Avtar Singh Pash, the renowned Punjabi poet was the other great personality whom I hosted in my JNU room. I do not think any person could surpass Pash in zeal, argumentativeness, love for poor people and Punjabyat. He could remain awake the whole night discussing a poem, meanness of the ruling classes and imperialism. This could continue for many more nights with



absolutely no problem to his comrades.

Last but not the least; it was in JNU that I met Gorakh Pandey. I often differed with him but loved his Bhojpuri and Hindi songs against exploitation. He wrote songs at our street theatre group's demand which inspired hundreds of peoples' movements. He is dead but Gorakh continues to live in his songs which we sing for our audiences almost every day.

So the JNU saga continues in my life. I adore it. JNU might have changed I have not.

Shamsul Islam (1972 batch)

JUST DO IT AT JNU

I started at JNU in 1986, within the BA Japanese program, and after spending a few of years in Japan (1989-1992) I returned to JNU to do an MA in Linguistics. Then I went on to complete a PhD in linguistics an MS in Computer and Information Science at Ohio State University (Columbus, Ohio), in 2002, and am now professor and chair of Psycholinguistics and Neurolinguistics at the Center of Excellence for Cognitive Sciences, University of Potsdam, Germany.



My experiences at JNU have sustained me throughout my life. In particular, the education I received there has been superlative. My years in Japan, the US, and now Germany have given me an opportunity to evaluate the abilities of many graduates of various Japanese-language programs from all over the world. It became pretty clear to me that the JNU Japanese program was (and probably is) one of the best in the world (another very impressive one is in Warsaw). What was special about JNU? My conclusion is that the program didn't hesitate to make students work really hard, with a lot of contact hours every day of the week (in OSU for example, students majoring in Japanese have language classes only for a few hours a week, and the results are dramatically different from JNU's). I remember working 8-10 hours a day, almost every day for three years, on Japanese and other subjects. While it was a harsh period, with a very narrow focus, the payoff has been tremendous. My experience in the Linguistics Master's degree was similar: a high quality education that gave me an edge in life.



My experiences in JNU taught me to focus my energies intensely on one thing, a skill that has proven useful in life (although it may just be that I am obsessive compulsive). Of course, I worked so hard only because I was (and still am) mesmerised by Japan and Japanese. The lesson I took away from that experience was: only ever do something you deeply care about, and ignore the rest. That principle has guided my decisions in life and led me take tremendous risks (for example, I quit a very safe and well-paying job as a patent translator in Japan back in 1992 and reinvented myself as a linguist and computer scientist, a process that consumed 10 years of my life).



Another wonderful thing about JNU was the physical environment. Delhi was (and no doubt still is) a messy, noisy, stressful city. JNU was a safe, green haven for me, a way to escape the dreariness. Now, living in Berlin, whenever I see bare autumn trees half-covered in mist, I think of cold autumn mornings in JNU, drinking tea, waiting for class to begin. It's hard not to get nostalgic when one looks back. I miss the library for example; it was full of strange and musty books I had never seen before. A singular discovery in that library was the astonishing poem, *Gnome*, by Beckett: "Spend the years of learning squandering / Courage for the years of wandering/Through a world politely turning/From the loutishness of learning." I think I haven't entered a physical library for about three years now; nowadays journals and books are electronically available, and most of what I read is smell- and dust-free pdf files.

Not everything was rosy, of course. It used to be pretty exhausting, to go through the whole ritual of signing up for, or dropping, a course: signatures from a large array of faculty members, and they have to be done in a particular order. A logistical nightmare. And the sudden student strikes always annoyed me. For me, JNU was somewhere I came to study, and it was always disappointing to be told I had to go back home because of a strike or - what was it called? - the GBM. I have no idea how legitimate the student parties' concerns were, but I was in my own world and never entered that world of politics.

But the JNU years were a formative period of my life. There is a saying that American universities like to throw about when students complain about the cost of education: if you think education is expensive, try ignorance. JNU wasn't expensive but it was (and probably still is) good; this showed me that intelligent syllabus design can beat throwing money at improving quality. I make fundamental policy decisions in my university now, and I use this insight for making decisions about what is taught and how (Germany is a lot like India education is essentially free but, compared to the US, money for university and course-development is limited).

In closing, I'd like to repeat the fundamental lesson I learnt at JNU: do something you have a passion for, and something that is pure fun; the rest will follow. Never do something just because it has "scope"; it's hard to be good at something you don't care about deeply.

Shravan Vasishth, Professor, University of Potsdam, Germany

BUILDING BRIDGES

Twenty-one years ago, a bright eyed, vivacious young Bambaiyya (me!) stepped into the sylvan surrounds of JNU... and never quite managed to leave. For, like so many others, the course of my life has been inextricably intertwined with the University. This is the place that not just gave me a great education and degrees, it gave me emotional and psychological anchoring, it gave me a valuable part of my identity, it moulded my politics.

It gave me friends for a lifetime, it gave me love and marriage and, I detect in my children's rebellious spirits, the iconoclasm that probably mutated their parents' genes!

The word I most readily associate with JNU is "space". Right from physical space-it was a great shock to see acres and acres of land given over to peacocks and squirrels and nilgais and cobras-all of which, I may add, I had earlier seen only in the Bombay Zoo. Then there was space in the sense of being "spaced out". I remember staring in shock and awe at the celebrated "dopies" hanging out outside ganga dhaba, wreathed in a thick haze of smoke. Levity apart, JNU accorded the space to be whatever it was one wanted to, whether an-all-work-no-play UPSC aspirant, or a jhola-toting Comrade, or a sleek fashionista hanging outside the School of Languages. It gave me the space to dream, to be crazy, to make friends from all over the world, to hang out all night on Parthasarathy Rocks with my boyfriend, to do the things I would never have been allowed to do back at home. Of course, it also gave me space to make the choices that could make or break my future. At any event, it gave me that most precious gift, freedom. How I used it, was my call.

In a world that is becoming increasingly intolerant, I look back at my JNU days with a certain wonderment. I think of its



astonishingly inclusive character, the relationships it fostered, the possibilities it opened. A few days ago, watching the carnage in Bombay (when I write in English, it is Bombay, when in Marathi its Mumbai) over the North Indian migrants issue, my son remarked, "Mummy, its dangerous to be half Bihari and half Marathi like us! We wont be welcome anywhere!" I told him that he and his brother were in fact the bridges that would ultimately bring communities closer together; they were living proof of the pluralism and inclusiveness that we talk about so much, and that I believe will ultimately triumph over divisiveness and hatred.

Let us celebrate an institution that values plurality, polyvocality and multiple perspectives above all else. Like I said earlier, I haven't quite managed to leave it yet.

Shubhangi Vaidya, joined the CSSS/SSS in 1987 as an M.A.student and went on to complete her MPhil. She submitted her PhD in 2008 at the same Centre and is Assistant Director, Regional Services Division, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

LOOKING BACK FONDLY

It is difficult not to be nostalgic about the good old days that one spent at JNU between 1972 and 1980.

These were the formative years of JNU. These were also the years of a rising surge for freedom and democracy in large parts of the third world. Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Palestine were not mere names; the daily struggles of the people in those faraway lands inspired heated and intense debates among the students in the campus and each aggressive move of colonial and apartheid regimes brought them out on the streets of Delhi.

JNU students did not engage only in solidarity with struggles being waged in far away places, they involved themselves with the suffering and daily struggles of the Indian people as well. They raised funds and organised relief and medical camps for the cyclone hit in Andhra and the flood affected in Delhi. It was the students of JNU who compelled the contractors who were building JNU to pay the minimum wage to the construction labour, to provide them medical care and to start a crèche for the children of the labourers. It was the students of JNU again who ran an underground students Union through out the internal emergency of 1975-76 when all unions and democratic protests were outlawed in the country.

There were a whole range of other issues that engaged the students for example the demand for the monthly mess bill not exceeding rupees 100 per month led to the formation of mess committees and the elected members not only monitored the expenses but took the trouble of going to the Mandis for buying vegetables, grains and spices to keep the monthly bill as low as possible.



The demand for implementing an inclusive admission policy led to the formation of student faculty committees, a first in any university in India. The students formed their own union, framed their own constitution and in another first set up their own election commission and initiated the tradition of elections fought on a manifesto that each candidate from the school council to the office bearers of the JNUSU had to defend before their respective general bodies. The only students Union Elections in the entire country that are even today free of use of muscle and money power.

These were seminal contributions to electing and running a representative body in a democratic manner through debate and discussion and not through brute force. Barring a few exceptions, where students lost sight of the significance of defending the institutions that they had themselves built, the traditions have endured.

Despite differences of perception, on many issues, between the students, the faculty and the administration one recalls with a certain degree of pride that eventually we were all able to sit across a table and agree on how to run our lives in the University.

Despite political differences, and they were serious differences, among the various political formations, the times when the participatory and democratic traditions of the university were challenged were few and far between.

Despite arguments, at times rather heated and, rare was the case when the Karamcharis and the students or the faculty and the Karamchari were ranged against each other. Rarer are the cases when any one has been uncivil to any Karamachari. The fact needs to be remembered because one does not generally witness such cordiality at many places outside JNU.

For the JNU community, especially the students, all this is routine and given, but for many of us who joined JNU after passing out of, or teaching and working in different universities, the 'much maligned' JNU Ethos took some effort to create and we look back on those heady days with justifiable pride.

JNU was not only political correctness, though we were politically correct much before the term became fashionable, it was also a lot of fun, groups of 40, 60 or even a 100 or more walking down to Priya, Chanakya, Archana or Kamal or a film show and walking back at 1.30 or 2.00 in the morning. The entire university playing holi together, hundreds sitting together around a fire and listening to Batuk Da and Anil Biswas singing old IPTA songs, exploring the ravines, or spending lazy winter afternoons on the Parthasarthy Plateau or marching down Aurobindo Marg - Students, Karmacharis and Faculty - all together to celebrate the victory of Vietnam over the US.

It is not only Nostalgia that gives an amber glow to the years, and in some cases decades, that we spent at JNU, it is also a sense of achievement at what JNU, with a total strength not in excess of a few hundred - students, faculty, karmcharis and administrative staff put together- was able to achieve.

The traditions that were built in those days included abhorrence of eve teasing, an almost total absence of muscle flexing, and strong opposition to communal profiling and caste discrimination. It is these traditions that are a product of the JNU Ethos and the active involvement of its students in questions that bedevil our society, It is these values that have drawn the best of young minds to JNU, it is these that have provided a sense of security to women, dalits and minorities and also to students from all parts of the country.

It is not for nothing that despite their small numbers, JNUites have made a mark in whichever discipline or field of endeavour they have chosen for themselves. This is a legacy that we of the first generation in JNU are proud of and fondly hope that the inheritors of this legacy will guard it and build upon it.

SOHAIL HASHMI, CSRD, SSS. First allottee of Room 108 in Kaveri. Founding trustee of Sahmat, the Gondwana Foundation and the ORB Foundation



MY YEARS AT JNU

Everything seemed strange to me when I entered JNU in 2000 for M.A sociology. The campus was huge and it was difficult for me to locate places easily. The distance between my hostel and school building was nearly 2 kms. I was not used to walking more than a hundred meters. Slowly I got used to walking and now I like it. Proudly I can say that JNU gave me fitness without making me spend time in the gym. Yoga classes were highly refreshing and infused new energy.

Different kinds of people from different places added the needed colour. In short JNU looked like a mini world. Although I had interacted with friends from different ethnicities earlier, the spread was far wider in JNU. Almost all states of the country were represented in the campus. Students from nearly 35 countries lived with us to exchange cultural traits. My classmates from Greece, Japan and Korea quickly learnt a few Hindi sentences and created a lot of interesting conversations. Unfortunately we couldn't learn their language and only tasted a few food items during the festivals.

Academics and politics mixed generously to give a rich cocktail culture. From dining halls to lecture rooms, issues of world importance dominated. In fact campus issues were least debated and global matters loudly discussed. With UPSC as goal for most of the students, naturally finer points were flowing meticulously. Some one was saying that parliamentarians keenly watch JNU debates to take points and relevant statistical data. Such was the relevance of micro tuning of academic matters.

Ganga Hostel where I stayed for eight years has both advantages and disadvantages. It is the first hostel in sight when one enters the campus. As far as the connectivity is concerned it is the best. The shopping complex, health centre and all important areas are nearby. The major disadvantage is during elections. It coincides with the UPSC mains. It is difficult to study with the non-stop sloganeering and interesting political debates. Slowly I got used to it and finally I managed to overcome this difficulty. The lawn in front of Ganga is also a hotbed of cultural activities. Food festivals and music programmes keep happening.

The hostel nite is an event which all of us eagerly waited for. Girls put in enormous efforts to give a good look to the hostel. All of us engaged in rangoli and cultural events. The mess committee managed authentic dishes very well. All the complaints about mess food were forgotten and collectively we worked for the success of the hostel nite. Suddenly the spirit of oneness comes into the scene. I see this as a good sign of camaraderie and the inculcation of team work for future.

Centre for the Study of Social Systems was my destination in JNU. It has stalwarts of sociology in the country. Regular seminars and symposiums kept us academically active throughout the year. In fact people used to joke

about it as centre for seminars and symposiums. More than the academics, the care and concern of the faculty members towards students made us to feel like one family.

The library which stocks a huge pile of books but where it is difficult to trace the significant ones tested our patience. Despite the online catalogue and computerized searches we have few helping hands to trace the misplaced books. Most of the times books keeping missing from the appropriate shelf. One can see the tension in the faces of dissertation, thesis and term paper submitting students in the library at the final moments. It is also a place where we enter into unending debates.

Life in JNU without mentioning dhabas will be incomplete. In fact dhabas inculcated the sense of simplicity in each one of us. Pakodas and chai were best during winter months. We made it point to go to dhaba atleast twice a day. Whenever I miss dhaba visits there is a vacuum created automatically. Wherever I go, JNU nostalgia will linger long in my memory.

S. Chandra

जे.एन.यू. एक अनुभूति

पटना विश्वविद्यालय से स्नातक करने तथा वहाँ के परिवेश से बाहर निकलकर जे.एन.यू. जैसे माहौल में अपने आपको ढालने में काफी—वक्त नहीं लगा था। फिर भी कई ऐसे दौर आये जिसे मैं झूल नहीं पाता। यहाँ मैं एक वाक्या का उल्लेख करना चाहता हूँ। बात शुरूआती दिनों की है जब मैं नये—नये बने छात्रावास नर्मदा में रह रहा था। हमलोग उस समय 666 नं. की डी.टी.सी. बस से ओल्ड कैम्प में क्लास करने जाया करता था। होस्टल के सामने ही एक विल्डिंग बन रही थी जो आज छात्र गतिविधियों का केन्द्र—टैफला के रूप में जाना जाता है। उसी—बिल्डिंग में काम करनेवाला एक मजदूर रहता था जिसकी एक दिन कांट्रेक्टर से किसीबात पर झगड़ा हुआ ओर उसे मारा पीटा गया। लहुलुहाल मजदूर, उसकी खूबसूरत रोती—बिलखती पत्नी और बच्चों की एक लंबी—चौड़ी फौज को कोई पूछनेवाला नहीं था। भूख लगने के बाबजूद मैंने अपना लंच छोड़ उस बिल्डिंग कांट्रेक्टर से जब इस बाबत बात करना चाहा तो कई मेरे साथियों ने मुझे इस मामले से अलग होने की—सलाह देने शुरू किया। और मुझे हैरानी तो तब हुयी—जब मजदूरों के हितों की बातें करने वाले छात्र नेताओं ने उस कांट्रेक्टर की तरफदारी—करते हुए मुझ पर दबाव बढ़ना शुरू किया। लेकिन इससे मेरे इरादे मजबूत हो गये थे। मैंने मजदूर के साथ तुरंत ही बसंत बिहार पुलिस स्टेशन जाकर शिकायत दर्ज करा दी तथा मजदूर को चिकित्सकीय सहायता भी उपलब्ध करायी। शाम आते—आते कई बड़ी—बड़ी हस्ती जिनसे मैं कभी मिला नहीं था, बस नाम ही सुन रखा था—मिलने आये। मेरी—प्रशंसा तो करने थे लेकिन छिपे अर्थों में डराने की भी असफल कोशिश करते। मजदूर जरूर सहमा सा लगता था। किन्तु उसकी पत्नी को शायद मुझ पर यकीन हो चला था। वह कोई भी समझौता जैसी—चीज बिना मुझसे पूछे करना ही नहीं चाहती थी। हाँ उनलोगों को अपने खाने—पीने की—चिन्ता कुछ ज्यादा थी।

डिनर लेने के बाद मैं अपने दोस्त श्री कृष्णा के साथ घूमने निकला। झेलम लॉन में एक नुक्कर नाटक का मंचन हो रहा था। यहाँ भी उस दिन मन नहीं लगा। मेरा मन बार—बार उस मजदूर की बेरोजगारी, भूखे—प्यासे बच्चों की ही तरफ था। मैं अपने दोस्त के साथ लौट चला। रास्ते भर हम दोनो चुपचाप आये। जब मैं कमरे में आया तो दोस्त ने मुझसे मेरी परेशानी का कारण पूछा। वैसे तो उसे सबकुछ पता ही था। उसने मुझे समझौता स्वरूप उस कांट्रेक्टर से कुछ रूपये लेकर और अपनी तरफ से कुछ पैसे उधार देकर उस मजदूर को ठीक टैफला के सामने चाय—बिस्कुट की दुकान खुलवा देने का सुझाव दिया। मैं बात मान गया। सुबह जब पुनः पुलिस की दबिस उस काँटेक्टर पर बढी तो वह काँटेक्टर स्वयं मुझसे मिलने आया। अब तक उसे भी शायद अपनी गलती और उसके कारण पुलिस का घर पर आने आदि से समझ आने लगी थी। चाय की चुस्कियों के बीच कई दोस्तों के सामने एक हजार रूपये उसने उस मजदूर को दिये और वापस पुनः वहाँ नौकरी करना नहीं चाहता था। मैंने तभी वहाँ चाय पी रहे सभी दोस्तों को सौ—सौ रूपये उस मजदूर को कुछ दिनों के लिए देने का आग्रह किया। दोस्तों ने मेरी बात रखी। उस मजदूर ने मेरे कहे अनुसार चाय बिस्कुट ब्रेड आमलेट का दुकान खोलने के लिए



उपयोग में आने वाली सारी चीजें शाम तक खरीद लाया और उसी रात डिनर के बाद उस दुकान का उद्घाटन भी अपने होस्टल के चौकीदार के हाथों करवा दिया। कुछ दिनों में वह जगह चाय के लिये इतना मजदुर हो गया कि रात तीन चार बजे तक भीड़ लगी रहती थी। इधर तब तक उस मजदूर के आठवें या शायद नौवें बच्चे भी आ गये थे। साल भर में ही उसने लगभग अस्सी हजार रुपये कमा लिये थे। यह मैं इसलिये बता रहा हूँ कि मैं ही उसका हिसाब-किताब कर दिया करता था। बस मुझे एक कप चाय अच्छी सी रात के बारह बजे मिल जाया करता था। मैं उसकी समृद्धि से बहुत ही खुश भी था। खैर उसके कारण गंगा ढाबा पर घटती आमदनी से चर्चित दुकानदारों की शिकायत पर जे एन यू के सुरक्षा अधिकारी ने अन्ततः छुट्टियों के दिनों में जब लड़के घर जाते हैं। रातों-रात हटा दिया। जब मैं घर से वापस आया तो वह लड़कों से बकाया वसूली करने आया था। बता रहा था कि वह वापस बिहार जा रहा है, वहीं एक दुकान खोल लेगा क्योंकि अब उसे इतना पैसा हो गया कि वह अपनी मातृ-भूमि अपने राज्य, अपने गाँव लौटेगा। अपने बूढ़े माँ बाप के पास। क्योंकि पैसे कमाने के अलावे भी और कुछ जीने के मायने हैं। उस समय मुझे ये सब समझ में नहीं आया और मैं उसे कुछ नहीं कह पाया था। अब धीरे-धीरे ये मायने समझ रहा हूँ।

डा० शैलेन्द्र मोहन ठाकुर

SEASONS IN THE SUN

There's not much today that makes one lyrical. Look around and all one can see is, as Neruda put it, the blood on the streets not much to get lyrical about really. Looking back at those years spent at JNU, charged by the atmosphere of intellectual exploration and heady idealism, is the only way, I feel, I can confront the reality I face everyday. A reality that seems bereft of ideals, of passion, of commitment all that I once saw and felt and believed in, during my days at JNU.

It was the late eighties the autumn of a counter-culture movement that marked the world; and our world was JNU... In fact, it amazes me now the way we seemed to be inside this bubble called JNU, a bubble that floated on its own, was sufficient unto itself and was well, literally afloat, elevated... Those were daunting days when the anti- Mandal movement in JNU meant street protests and long candle-light marches; sloganeering, jeering and relay hunger strikes (hey, those were difficult to keep); performing street plays, courting arrest and merrily going to jail!!! My 1st sem in JNU! An awakening... a baptism in standing up for what I believed in. Frantic phone calls from home with ma in Calcutta (yes, half of us were bongs and the remaining were from Bihar and Orissa even then) advising me to stay away from the streets and not to 'get into politics'; now how can you call yourself a JNUite and not 'be' in politics?!

Those were the days when SAK was not a star... when a stray remark from him (don't ask me what...we never came to know even then) near Ganga

Dhaba, the launch pad of any agitation, late at night or was it the wee hours of the morning, saw him bashed up, his car battered and his protesting self taken to Vasant Vihar police station, till he was rescued by an irate MAK, his father what a diversion right in the middle of the end sem exams!!

You never knew what the campus had in store for you or whom you might meet post-dinner...Shabhana Azmi? Sitaram Yechury? An ex-Prime Minister? The President? And you never knew whether the guest would live to see another morning for exchanges within the dining messes would often get charged and though not physically violent, verbally aggressive and at times the shocked speaker would be literally held hostage by an equally captive audience! And what endless discussions with *chai* either at G.dhabs or at Periyar or at TEFLAS... I often wonder whether the owners are millionaires really, the kind of mud we drank by the gallons and, from what I hear, students still do? And the Ganga Hostel lawns were veritable battlegrounds given the number of Debates held all the time the JNUSU Presidential debates where we heard fiery speeches from Amit Sengupta, Tanveer, Shakeel; where the *Maha Chaat* contest during Holi had the tamest JNUite rebelling at the assault upon the ears at the non stop drivel being mouthed.....

Those were the days when literary theory was storming the citadels of a canonical Eng Lit syllabus ...there were those agonizing nights spent figuring out Sinfield and Dollimore and throwing tantrums when one didn't understand... the Term Paper, the class presentation, those absolutely devastating quizzes we answered for KK, those terrifying confrontations with 'She Who Will Not Be Named', the marathon classes with GJV, the nights spent at the library before exams...there was a certain revelry in studying...if that makes any sense at all. It was almost as if we were swamped by work...and loving it!!!

PVR Priya was just plain Priya and was as enticing and welcoming as it is now. We saw everything...from badly hacked up films like *An Officer and a Gentleman* to Bollywood masalas... all for a noble price of six rupees. The beginning of the month would see our pockets well lined and so, visits to Nirulas (we survived on the Big Boy Burger and the ice creams those days...no other choice) were frequent, and then mid-month when destitution lurked, the indomitable bun omelette at ganga dhaba was sheer food for the gods.... Sometimes you could tell the menu of a hostel simply by seeing the crowd at the dhaba, the entire lot of residents would descend upon Ganga Dhaba if there was *karela* for dinner.... JRFs and SRFs were more modest those days, not the princely sums they are now and served well for the thukpa and momos at kaichas but not for the Five stars I believe JNUites visit these days. Of course it was also a mind set with us; it was just so pathetically middle class to want to go to Five stars...

The *amaltas* lined avenues, the *kulfi* point close to Poorvanchal, the Parthasarthy Rock of which every JNUite worth her salt is fiercely proud of....JNU was the stuff of which romance is made ! From drunken revelry to romantic couples kissing unconcerned of passersby to *adda* sessions about practically every issue in space and outer space that Ring road of JNU has witnessed it all! This was also the same road that sparks off another memory. One hot summer, vacation time, when Sabarmati hostel went without water for days together, nothing seemed to move the admin to rid us of our woes and we were constantly told 'Kal Tak....' And then en masse the residents went and lay down on the road making vehicular movement impossible it worked like magic, this road capturing. Within the hour the Vice Chancellor had the problem sorted out and normalcy was restored in the hostel.

Few people had vehicles those days, and I mean both students and faculty. Rare was the roar of the mobike and waiting for Godot was the common term for the long hours spent craning our necks for that delightful sight of 615, as it came trundling along, the bus driver and his helpers smirking at our barely controlled impatience. We had a shuttle bus that went all around via AIIMS and back to JNU and many were the times we hopped on, just for a lark, especially on rainy days when there wasn't much to do on campus what gloriously leisure filled times they were! Of course for the multitudes who sat for the UPSC, none of this mattered you could see them, every season poring over Rau's study material in those cages (we thought them so) on the ground floor of the library (right next to the phone booth). For us non UPSC types, they were a blot on the landscape we would boast that we had a canteen with a library facility but



the UPSC wallas destroyed our claim!

If JNU gave us one thing more, then it was diversity that invisible yet palpable force challenging our stereotypes. It made us relate to others, made us tolerant in an age of intolerance. It touched our core values and made us humane. Such brave thoughts, we felt, would help bring a brave new world. Those were the days in the sun...

Swati Pal, Reader, JDM College, DU

THE BENEFITS OF JNU

I joined JNU as a student in the M.Phil/Ph.D programme in July, 1975. One thing that I cherish till date about that time is that I topped the entrance exam in my subject that year. My research work was on dry land agriculture in Maharashtra. After four years of study here, I went back to Maharashtra to teach in the college where I studied before coming to JNU. But soon I was called back by Prof. Moonis Raza to appear for an interview for the post of Associate Professor in CSR. I was selected and joined JNU as a faculty member in 1980. I am presently on a five-year long deputation from my Professorship. So I have been associated with JNU for the last 33 years, 5 years as a student and the rest as a teacher.



One of the most outstanding aspects of JNU is its vibrant student community. There are two aspects related to student life in JNU. The first one is the scope for students in JNU to engage academically with issues related to various spheres of life. Then there is the JNU Students' Union. Such academic as well as political freedom is hardly provided anywhere else in India. The unique feature of Students' Union is that they never lose sight of academics. In fact, even during JNUSU elections, the engagement with domestic and international issues is academically grounded. The level at which students engage in elections here is academically very rich. You get exposed to several ideological issues and streams. This atmosphere provides a platform to develop one's career. We all know that JNU culture has produced many stalwarts of Indian politics. JNU has given the nation some of its best leaders. It is a training ground for a very enlightened leadership. I benefitted a lot out of this. I developed my own perspective on various social issues in JNU. We brought to the forefront of academic discourse certain important issues like caste and poverty being forces of marginalization and discrimination. Though JNU had always been conducive to leftist discourse which concentrated on the issue of class divide, I, along with some others, decided to focus on caste as the most deep-rooted source of marginalization in our society. We started the Ambedkar Study Circle. It was a purely academic body with an intention to look into the dynamics of caste in Indian society. We interacted with the left on this issue and it all helped me immensely to develop my own perspective and also to change the perspective of those who were around me. I think this is my most cherished memory of JNU.



Another remarkable aspect of JNU is the relationship that exists between

students and teachers. One of the good things about JNU is that students feel a lot more comfortable and at ease to develop a relationship with teachers. They can thus engage with the teachers in a much more meaningful way. Teachers treat the students on equal footing and there is a degree of informality in their interaction.

The other important aspect is JNU's examination system. More emphasis is laid on essays, papers and reviews and less on written examination. This non-written component brings out the best in the student. As a student, I benefitted a lot out of this system. I developed my skills of writing and speaking, data collection, interpretation and my confidence because of the unique system of assessment and evaluation in JNU. This is and will remain a characteristic feature of JNU. In terms of infrastructure too, the atmosphere provided to the student (90% residential facility, single rooms in my days, cheap food and good library facility) are conducive to research and academic excellence.

I clearly recognize that JNU students make a distinct mark wherever they go. It is only because of their upbringing as students in JNU. But I also want to make an appeal to the alumni to contribute in some way or the other to JNU. They should give back to JNU in their own ways. I urge upon JNU alumni to contribute to JNU both through finances and through other means. This could be a way of paying back to a university which has enriched their lives so much. I also hope that JNU succeeds in carrying forward the culture it has built in all these years. I hope we are able to strengthen it and build up further on it.

Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairperson, UGC.

A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT

My association with the JNU goes back to 1975. It was immediately after the emergency that I joined the M.Sc. Programme in Life Sciences. This was the first programme of its kind in India and many of us who enrolled for this programme had serious questions about our future. We were continuously reassured by our teachers including the then Dean, Professor P.N. Srivastava that we would have no problem in finding a placement for us once we completed the programme. Quite often we will exploit our status as experimental "guinea pigs" to ensure that not only our voices were heard but also our whims and fancies were "respected" and "accommodated" by the faculty. It was a wonderful experience with just about a dozen of us running around between the new campus and the old campus, and not only having fun but also getting exposed to the political proactivity at the JNU. As a Master's student the first six months were terribly difficult for a number of reasons, academic as well as cultural but we could quickly adapt to the same. After that there was no looking back.

Perhaps one of the good things I learnt while being at the JNU was the ability to articulate and convince a person. This was made possible because of my brief stint as an active member of the JNU Students' Union. I remember the days very fondly when I was elected as a Counsellor of the School of Life Sciences and was also elected as the Convenor to represent the School in the Students' Union Council under the leadership of Mr. Sitaram Yechury. Emergency was just lifted and the JNU Students' Union started this campaign for removal of the "guilty four". This campaign led to the Union mobilizing the students in taking out marches, walking all the way up to the residence of Professor B.D. Nagchaudhuri, (near Tughlak Road Police Station) the then Vice-Chancellor. And of course, the hunger strikes (of the relay kind, not the real fasting kind) was fun. All of this honed in me the art of getting to put across our views in a positive way and at the same time without losing our respect for our teachers. JNU taught us to be independent, fierce and simultaneously not to forget the *guru shishya parampara* which is perhaps fading in our Indian value system. After a year of active life as a Students' Union leader I took a complete 'U' turn and went back to my studies, completed my Ph.D. thesis in a record time of about two years, securing the highest CGPA in the pre-Ph.D. Course work,

Life in the hostel particularly during election time was equally stimulating with debates going on till early hours of the day mostly on issues totally unrelated to day-to-day activities but more concerned with what Stalin had to say or Karl Marx wrote in the *Das Kapital* without any relevance whatsoever to JNU problems. It was a real-real fun taking tea



breaks to have tea at Kashi Ram *dhaba* and also take a puff of then famous Charminar Gold Cigarette. Life in the Laboratory was perhaps more exciting, working late hours quite often, knocking at the doors of Mr. Avais Ahmed or Mr. Alexander or Mr. Khan requesting them to fix our centrifuge, or some other equipment which had temporarily ceased to function. Sleeping on the Lab bench for the night after doing late night experiments was a usual feature. Getting up early morning to go to the hostel to be woken up only in the afternoon was also not very unusual. My experience in the laboratory additionally inculcated in me the abilities to do things independently, to analyse data and to publish the same. In a nutshell I am very proud of my JNU connection and all that I have today, I owe much of it to my six long years I spent at JNU.

Syed E. Hasnain, Vice-Chancellor, University of Hyderabad



MY MEMORIES OF J.N.U. DURING 1981-1990

I joined the M.Phil/Ph.d programme in SIS, in the Centre for International Politics and Organisation, in the eighties. My contemporaries were Prof. Avijit Pathak, Prof. Ajay Patnaik, Dr. Aswini Mahapatra, Dr. Chintamani Mahapatra, Dr. Sahadevan, Prof. Malakar, Dr. Vijaya Laxmi etc. And Dr. Saumen Chatterji is our junior.

Life in JNU during our times were very exciting, there was kind of brotherhood and a kind of belonging among the JNUites. Of course, there was a kind of Left thinking and behaviour among the students. JNU students also had the same handicap as other students at the most, they could visualize and dream about revolution and an utopian world, but their relevance in the outside campus was minimal.



In those times the student community never liked to identify with right wing forces. The student commitment for left ideology may have been superficial, but the students during our days never liked to identify themselves with the NSUI and ABVP. My days at JNU were exciting; I felt that a place like JNU is an Intellectual Centre. Of course, it gave many things. To those who wanted to become IAS and IPS officers, it offered the best coaching and to those who wanted to become serious academicians it offered good training and knowledge.



JNU is like a place for experiments, it's a mix of many things. The campus life did not escape from the caste culture of society, despite the left thinking and ideology. This was an unfortunate thing that is being repeated and inculcated every where in India. After all ours is a casteist society. Unfortunately, whatever ideology we believe and profess, sometimes I think it stops at some point caste, colour, race and perhaps region. We are intellectuals, I suppose, and need to be honest and courageous to speak the truth.

When I joined JNU, Prof. Sukhdeo Thorat was an Asst. Professor and Prof. Kale was working for his Ph.d as a research scholar. 1983-84 was a

tumultuous period in JNU. The past is always wonderful and always very joyful and the present always enigmatic and painful. The student struggle in JNU, which took place in 1983, was compared to the 1968 student unrest in Paris and USA. And it was a spontaneous movement. The student life in JNU cannot be compared to any campus in India, for various reasons. It sent its students to various states as IAS and IPS officers and for various services. I feel it was a pity not many students emerged as political leaders on the national scene or in their own states.

I believe now JNU has changed so much, and the quality of students also has deteriorated. Of course, this deterioration is an all India phenomenon. I was told by many of my seniors and some persons of eminence that the establishment of JNU was with a vision, and it was supposed to be an elite institution and in India it could be treated as a centre of excellence on par with Yale, Harvard, and Stanford. Did we live up to that level of expectations? That it did is a fact and it continues to be so, sending many scholars to United States and Europe.

As old alumni of JNU, we should strive to improve the quality of teaching and higher learning. And since it is a premier institution, it should shoulder the responsibility of being more creative and being a trend setter in India. JNU should be able to beat premiere Chinese institutions.

As JNU cannot escape the ills of the Indian society, it should be in the forefront in implementing the policy of reservations for OBCs, SC & STs. It is a social policy and JNU should be in the forefront in offering the social justice. With these few observations and comments I am sharing my thoughts about my JNU - a dream institution in India. And I always feel for JNU as it offered me something to boast of, and something to survive as a very good human being and scholar.

T. Krishna Kanth, Professor

MY DAYS AT JNU

I joined Jawaharlal Nehru University in the first year of its establishment in October 1970 as a PhD student in School of International Studies. It was thirty eight years ago and therefore before almost any of the present day students would have been born! SIS was one of the first constituent institutions of JNU and we were the first student batch to join JNU as the first batch of students in the School of Social Sciences joined in June 1971. We were only 30 in number and every one of us got scholarships from either the State from where one hailed or from the UGC.

Those were wonderful days. Staying in the political capital of the country with scholarship made me think the sky was the limit for my activities. SIS was at 35 Ferozeshah Road and the hostel for both boys and girls was at the back of Sapru House. This was the most central location one could have in Delhi with Bengali market and CP at arm's length. I did not realize how time flew and one year of my stay ended without my recognizing that it had gone.

There were however some land mark events which influenced my activities. The first batch at SSS and the second batch of students at SIS joined in June 1971. SIS increased its enrollment manifold. There was another institution called School of Russian language which was merged with School of Languages when the latter was established. The institution of the university saw the immediate politicisation of the campus, with the entry of leftist ideologues. This had a profound impact on SIS students who were politically neutral.

The formation of JNU Students Union divided SIS students and the first year batch which sent Mr. Prakash Karat to the School's union in December 1970 asked for his resignation. The only crime committed by their representative was that he did not take his batch mates, whom he represented at SIS level, into confidence before mooted the formation of centralised JNU student's union in place of SIS students Union.

The features of present JNU Students Union having representation of different schools in the Union and the President directly elected owes a great deal to the fight that my October 1970 batch put up for, and with, Prakash Karat and his



political associates at the School and JNU level. It was my political baptism by fire. Most of us forgot our studies, with Prakash forgetting to write the thesis under Professor Bimal Prasad! Once JNU Students union was established it was captured by the Student Federation of India. One of the first acts of JNU students union was to demonstrate against visit of British PM Edward Heath's visit at Sapru House auditorium. It was a class act and the professionalism of the organisers even took Delhi police by total surprise.



Having hit the international headlines the Students Union under Mr. O.N. Shukla began demanding democratization of decision making bodies of JNU and its Schools. My friends and I were active participants in these fights. Seeing what was happening at JNU other political parties began to penetrate JNU students' body. What a fight there was in student elections. I gained as much as I lost in devoting my self to Student activities. Political penetration among students and faculty members and their coordinated activities to promote leftist ideology and help maintain SFI control led to a sizeable number of students from SSS declaring themselves apolitical by forming FREE THINKERS. Success came the way of Free Thinkers when Anand Kumar defeated Prakash Karat in his attempt to get reelected as JNUSU President. I will stop here as others are still there in JNU faculty to continue with the story.



My activities at JNU gave me lot of self confidence and also a close view of how political penetration of academic institutions is achieved. I was advised to a follow political career as precious years were lost for research but then I had different ideas. I came back to Bombay where I continued my academic career. Some of my contemporaries are still on the faculty of different schools and I relish visiting JNU whenever an opportunity presents itself.

Dr. V. S. Sheth, Bombay

DOWN THE MEMORY LANE

On a sultry summer afternoon, in 1971, I sojourned along the Rajpath, to take the highway towards the attainment of specialized knowledge in the field of International Relations. After my MA from Madras, I was foraging for a job in Delhi, the capital of India, or alternatively, proceeding to pursue higher education. Since I hail from a family of teachers and advocates, it was but natural for me to opt for one of these familiar options. To this end, I was goaded to reach the Vigyan Bhavan Annexe, where I was to meet an Officer on Special Duty of a University yet to be established.



Ater an exhaustive exploration of the dark corridors of the Vigyan Bhavan Annexe, I ended up in the office of the OSD. I found a frail South Indian, with all his Gandhian simplicity, sitting quietly reading the Law Lexicon. My few taps on the door did not distract him from his avowed attention. I raised my voice to greet him; the gentleman, in his early sixties, looked up to survey the intruder, hardly in his early twenties and in search of his destiny. He

perhaps wondered why I was there to disturb his well earned solitude. I introduced myself and placed my desire to undertake research work in the upcoming University in the field of International Relations. He directed me to meet Professor M. S. Venkatramani, the then Dean of the Indian School of International Studies, which was then a part of the Indian Council for World Affairs.

Being unfamiliar with Delhi, I found it very difficult to trace Ferozeshah Road where the ISIS was then situated. Coming from the land of the Dravidians, Hindi was almost an alien language to me and I could only shout to the bus conductors a name which was familiar to me as a historian, "Ferozeshah." I later sympathized with my North Indian friends who undertook voyages to the Southern part of India and had to face innumerable problems owing to the sub-regional linguistic hegemony.

I reached ISIS on a Friday morning. After a few minutes of great expectations, I was ushered in to the spacious office of the Dean. I found a handsome man in his early fifties, dressed in an elegant green suit, with a red spotted bow reminding me of the picture of the President Franklin D. Roosevelt. I was 'chilled' in his presence - not because his authoritative demeanor, but because I had rarely been exposed to an air-conditioned atmosphere! He looked at me with a gleaming smile reminiscent of President Truman. After going through my curriculum vitae, he asked me to meet him at a later date with my proposed research project.

With redoubled enthusiasm to undertake work in US Foreign Policy, I spent long hours in the Sapru House Library reviewing the primary and secondary source material. On the D Day, I arrived in seemingly 'decent' attire to present myself before the Dean. He was kind enough to go through my proposal and having realized that I was keen on doing research in US foreign policy, he accepted me as a Research Scholar and put me under the tutorship of one of his trusted colleagues, Dr. R. Narayanan. Professor Ramani, throughout my research work and thereafter, kept a constant tab on my progress. At this juncture, I must record my sincere gratitude to teachers who moulded my perceptions of US foreign policy and gave me lessons on human behavior. Other professors of eminence, Professor Jose L Ferriera Jr. and Professor Segrierra Jr., helped me gain insights into Latin American affairs.

Whatever I seem to have accomplished over the span of my career, I owe to these great personalities. I recount the time when I was to head to the US for the first time on my field trip, I was given long hours of briefing by Professor Ramani and Professor Narayanan on how to conduct myself during my stay in the US. Prof. Narayanan, I recall, used to sit with me till late hours at night to draft letters to Senators and Congressmen, whom I knew I would never meet, but nevertheless it was an exercise laced with good intentions.

On my return from the US, I took up an appointment with Sri Venkateshwara College, Delhi University, and continued to do my research work at SIS, JNU. The ISIS from which I earned my M. Phil. Degree, had now become a nucleus around which the new JNU evolved.

My long years of stay at SIS, JNU, instilled in me the spirit of the intellectual fraternity. By the fragrance of the flowers that blossomed in campus, one could predict that the winter was just round the corner. The cold Himalayan winds blowing across the campus of JNU would force people to huddle together and enjoy several cups of hot tea, provided by the Dhaba owner, who was more a socialist than a capitalist.

From various corners of India, we migrated to JNU to gather and feed on the seeds of knowledge. I now find members from the third generation in my own family making their mark as erudite scholars in their own areas of specialization. For us, JNU has become a second home.

I recall a poem my father, Professor K Vaidyanathan, wrote in one of his anthologies entitled *Don't Laugh at the East*, where he had this to say:



We love our scholars who are not vain,
They write works immortal day by day
To win the hearts of the World by giving away

JNU scholars can be credited for such an endeavor. Most of us not only cherish the memories but also carry on the intellectual traditions of our Alma Mater.

V. Shivkumar, Founder-Director and Senior Professor of the UGC Centre for Latin American and International Studies, Goa University.

CITIZENS OF THE WORLD

I joined JNU in 1982 as a M.A. Student in C.H.S. Later, as an M.Phil student I worked on the Karnatas of East India under the guidance of Prof. Romila Thapar. Then I registered for Ph.D but could never manage to complete it due to my extra-curricular interests. Those were the times of all round students agitations. JNU witnessed it in 1983 under the Vice-Chancellorship of Prof. P.N. Srivastava. We even went to jail! I was in Tihar Jail for 14 days. Later the Bipin Chandra Committee was set up and changes were brought about in the deprivation points system. So that was how my JNU sojourn began.

I can not think of my existence without JNU. If I had not got admission in JNU, I would not have been anywhere. Despite being a very good student, I got only 52% marks in B.A. in Patna University. I would never have made it to any place where marks decided one's fate. So JNU was a boon for me.

The high level of cultural and ideological awareness in JNU attracts me the most. This is not seen anywhere else in India. To think of oneself as a citizen of the world and to be able to ask questions are the most important thing one is taught in JNU. This is the strength of JNU.

Vagish Jha

A SECOND HOME

I was a regular student of SC&SS, JNU from 1989 to 1993 while pursuing my M.Tech and Ph.D in Computer Science. I was subsequently awarded the Ph.D degree in 1995.

Hailing from a sleepy small town, the aura of Delhi in general and the environment of JNU in particular awed me. To top it, I was the only girl student in the entire class of M.Tech (1989 1991). Not that it made me frightened and lonely, on the contrary, I have had the privilege of making some very good friends whose companionship and help I shall always cherish.

The hostel rooms with individual and private cosy balconies made me instantly fall in love with the place. The odd-hour food at the dhaba, the endless cups of tea from Robin, and the night shows of Priya, the cawing of peacocks, the colourful trees, the sonic boom of the low flying international



flights, the rocks stretching out far up to the horizon as seen from my balcony in Godavari Hostel ...all are etched distinctly in my memory. What I find particularly interesting about JNU is the freedom and loose discipline which I now understand as the bedrock for a strong character building. The catchy dresses of smart big-city girls and the khadi kurtas of bearded Gandhian guys all merged smoothly with the wild yet home-like atmosphere of JNU...as if it had the might and depth to engulf all differences of caste, thought, family background, economic level and make everybody be a JNUite only!

Viewed from the academic point, the liberal syllabi framed by esteemed Professors provided a lot of scope for investigation into the subjects during class room lectures as well as during projects/sessionals. The friendly attitude of faculty members provided the motivation for research and their own high academic achievements boosted us to follow their footsteps. So far as I can recollect, six of my M.Tech batch mates, if not more, completed their Ph.D from JNU! And at least three of us are pursuing careers as academicians. I recall the words of one of our Professors, "Research is an attitude...", and I realize how true he was as I guide my research scholars or while cooking or teaching my children, in fact almost in everything I do.

I have regained touch with JNU for the past two years with the annual NCM2C conference and look forward to each visit as a homecoming.

Vandana (Saroch) Bhattacharjee, Associate Professor, Deptt. of Computer Science & Engg. Birla Institute of Technology, Ranchi

A NEW WORLD

*Ai jazba-e-dil gar tu chahe har cheez mukabil aa jaye.
Manzil ke liye do paon chale aur saamne manzil aa jaye.*

I joined JNU way back in the mid-70's. Those were the best years of my life, even as I wasn't very sure of my future academic plans then. I knew nothing about research at the School of Social Sciences. I still remember my interview. One of the interviewers was Prof Rashiduddin Khan, a member of the Rajya Sabha and a stalwart in academics. I was very nervous but I must have performed well because I was selected. JNU was a new world then.

There were very few students. I was a day scholar and my friends used to stay in the hostel. I would get home-made food for them and we would all sit together in hostel rooms or lawns and enjoy that food with cups of hot tea. The atmosphere taught us so much about living in and as a community. We got acquainted with various cultures and never felt any wall divide us. We were all students of JNU and that's all we knew about ourselves.

The teacher-taught relation was exemplary in JNU. There was something remarkable about our teachers. They never asked us to buy books. They would always lend their own books to us. And, from them we got all those books which were not available in the library. . They valued and respected us a lot and the usual hierarchy that exists between teachers and students was not practiced at all. I especially remember one incident in relation to this incident. Prof. P.C. Joshi and Balraj Sahni were great friends. Once when Balraj Sahni came to the campus, Prof. Joshi introduced all of us to him and we had tea together.

Our teachers were concerned about our careers as if we were their own children. They are the ones who inspire me to take up any research opportunity that presents itself. I still read and understand things from an academic point of view, be it *The Ramayana* or Kabir. The good thing about JNU was that one never faced hurdles in publishing your thesis. Mine on the elitist theory of democracy, titled *Rajnitik Abhijan: Bhartiya Sandarbha*, was published by Macmillan. The Hindi Sansthan (UP Govt.) even conferred an award on it. My grandfather was a freedom fighter. And while he did not go into politics after independence, all his contemporaries became political bigwigs. This compelled me to think why some people do not join politics despite having fair chances of success and why others join politics. Such a project was



possible only in JNU where we were encouraged to bring the personal to the classroom and think about it.

The examination system was extraordinary in our days. Prof. Imtiaz Khan who used to teach Political Sociology told us that he would give us an exam. So, understandably, we slogged all night, read everything, bought new inkpots and prepared ourselves the way we were used to at other institutions before JNU. However, when we reached class, we found that he had written the questions on the blackboard. There was no proper question paper! And when we had all copied the questions and were wondering how to write so much in such little time, he said that it was a carry-home exam. We were stunned. But that was the day I learnt that if you have not understood the subject well, you cannot do well in the exam. And, if you've studied and understood, you'll never be tempted to cheat. Even though we wrote our exams sitting at home, we earned our grades with honesty.



Then there was Francis *ka* Dhabha in old campus. That *dhabha* sold the cheapest tea in the world. Just 25 paise per cup! We all paid for the whole class on a rotational basis. I would say that all the students of that time, including the political leaders who have attained very high status now, would still have some debt to pay at Francis. We would all get tea on credit once in a while! And we discussed the world over those sips of tea.

In those days there used to be many couples who later got married. Even I met my husband in JNU. He was in SIS. We became friends in JNU and much later, after leaving JNU, we got married. We hardly ever have arguments. And if we have one, it gets resolved within minutes. I think that is something special about JNU couples.



JNU has taught me how to speak in public without inhibitions. JNU has taught me fearlessness and boldness. I have worked on the redlight areas of Delhi as part of my doctoral dissertation. We conducted a study called *We Too Are Children* for the Social Welfare Board, and later started a centre called 'Srijan' to support children of the sex workers there. I am not afraid of expressing my opinion. In Rajdhani College (which is co-ed) there are 103 teachers (more men than women). I am the first woman to become principal of this college. They were not used to working under a woman. It took them some time to accept me as their boss. Not that I think of myself as boss. I have kept my JNU culture intact with me, as far as that goes. I do not discriminate between superiors and subordinates even in my workplace. I am completely approachable for all my students and staff alike. I still take one class early in the morning because to stay away from academics and become an administrator is impossible for me. I am first a teacher and then an administrator. It's like continually living the ideas I learnt at JNU.

Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, Principal, Rajdhani College



FROM THE OTHER SIDE

MY LIFE AT JNU

It was a very remarkable experience for a young man like me when I joined JNU in '77, as an Associate Professor in CSRD. I became the VC in 2001. The most outstanding achievement in my time was the idea of student representation on the Executive and Academic Council. I look back with great satisfaction as teacher representation through election was also approved then. There was a tremendous amount of restructuring of schools in my time and the most notable was SIS. We strove to establish academic entities which are more in tune with the developments taking place today. So we dissociated Korean Studies from South Asian Studies and made it a separate centre. And, it was the first time in my tenure that we invited the President of India to JNU. The community was simply enthralled. The stadium was packed this was an overwhelming response. We also invited some other international personalities like the Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

UGC had a scheme for organizing bridge classes for weaker sections (especially the SC/ST). When I took over as the VC, we appointed people at the centre and the school level squarely responsible for the operations of this scheme. And in a year's time, the number of people who came forward to avail of the facility swelled tremendously. Likewise, the year before I joined as the VC, UGC chose five universities in India including JNU as sites with potential for excellence. The selection was made after considering their research output and a sum of 30 crore rupees was set aside to develop these. I decided that every centre should get a part of this grant. Thanks to the JNU vision and to the Academic Council, we decided that excellence is not and should not be confined to only some centres and disciplines. We distributed the grant to all schools and centres. This made a tremendous impact. Ours is the only university where the output of the Social Sciences and Humanities is, if not better, definitely as good as that of the Physical and Life sciences. In fact, JNU can take more pride in its contribution to the Social Sciences.

Towards the close of my tenure as VC, I thought that Indian education was at a stage when we should take our neighbouring countries along with us in our forward march. Under that kind of vision, I initiated a proposal to organize a seminar of VCs of universities in SAARC countries. It was held in March'05 and was appreciated by one and all. I have always been a champion of academic brotherhood and get-together, they can work wonders and I have been prompted in this by the vibrant student community of JNU. In my time, 247 students from other countries came to JNU (in my final year as VC). It was a learning experience not only for me but for all the JNUites. In my time, our university also opened up to numerous other universities in the world in a bigger and more aggressive way, stepping up the pace of international academic collaboration.

One encounters different types of problems at different stages. But JNU has always been on the move it has never been a standstill entity or a stagnant place. The 1980's were very trying times for JNU. Some people call those years 'bad years' but I call them very disappointing years. What is undeniable about JNU is that, left to ourselves, we can resolve any issue amicably. There can be strong opinions, disagreements, strikes, agitations but there is invariably a solution at the end. The agitations are rarely for a personal cause but for common good for instance, the extension of library hours, an increase in the number of textbooks. This is what stands out about JNU. As the VC, at times, I had very heated arguments with the students. But in the heart of my heart, I loved them and I can also say the same for the students. You will not find such a relationship between the teacher and the taught anywhere else.

Anybody who becomes a student at JNU is a very lucky person. It is not at all easy to get a seat at JNU and so, it puts you in a position of great social responsibility. I am extremely proud of my students at JNU. They have taken up issues which are highly relevant to the society, to the downtrodden, to the underprivileged, issues which will usher in good for the society at large. And, they should continue to do so.

Professor GK Chaddha, Former Vice Chancellor

JNU: A GRAND EXPERIMENT



The foundational philosophical goals of JNU were clearly defined by Parliament in 1969 and this pioneering institution of higher education has always been intellectually and politically engaged in safeguarding the best social philosophy enshrined in the Indian Constitution and which is reflected in Parliament's Act. It was a bold decision by the JNU to launch M. Phil programme in 1971 and M.A. programme in 1972 especially beginning with the Centres of the School of Social Sciences. It was for the first time in the history of university system that contents of courses and the method of teaching and evaluation of M.A. and M. Phil. students was discussed, debated and decided by the Faculty Members and the Indian society had reposed its full faith and confidence in the intellectual commitment of the teaching faculty as had the students of JNU who had voluntarily decided to join an institution which was absolutely different from the mainstream university system of India. The 1970s, the first decade of the JNU, cannot be called just a foundational and formative period, because every innovation of participatory system of teaching and research and the democratic management of university affairs was launched from the very beginning and from the semester system of education and evaluation to the 'self-governance' system of participatory democracy by the students was started from the very launch of the "grand experiment" of JNU. A few extremely salient features of the beginning years of the JNU deserve to be stated here with a view to substantiate the argument that JNU created an atmosphere of intellectual excitement and teachers and students were actively engaged in quest for answers to fundamental challenges facing human societies both at the global and national levels. First, the seriousness of students who were involved in search for difficult answers to difficult questions would become clear by referring to the slogan of "Study and Struggle" which was the guiding philosophy of student democracy. The philosophy of "Study and Struggle" was concretized by bringing Theory and Practice on the same level of intellectual activity. This marriage of Theory and Practice was reflected in interdisciplinary seminars on the Mode of Production, Semi- Feudalism, the social content of Indian Bourgeoisie, and the nature of anti colonial struggles and the relationship between India and the Cold War Bipolar World. These seminars outside the class rooms were pioneering enterprise because they were participatory and transcended disciplinary boundaries.

Second, from the very beginning, JNU was non-sectarian headquarters of intellectualism and student organizations like SFI, the AISF, and the Troteskeyites, not only contested on the platform of the "real meaning of Marxism and Leninism and Troteskyism", the organization known as the Free Thinkers was actively involved in contesting the ideology of Marxism. The contest of ideas was a hallmark of teachers and students of the JNU. Third, the greatest value practiced by teachers and students was reflected in the practice of respect for intellectual dissent and this provided spaces to the clash of multiple ways of thinking on social issues. The only ideology

which became an integral fact of JNU's academic culture was reflected in the freedom of speech, expression and asking 'questions' without any hesitation or constraint. This academic culture of inquisitiveness has impacted everyone who has joined JNU in a common effort to search for answers. JNU can claim that it has created a body of students and teachers who can think for themselves and this is no mean achievement of a university in the Indian social authoritarian context. Intellectual dissent, debate and discussion have been the hallmark of JNU academic ethos.

Can JNU survive and thrive as an autonomous academic institution of higher learning? Eric Hobsbawm has observed that "the spectre of globalization haunts us" and western economic hegemony in the age of globalization cannot be sustained without "Cooptation" of the university academics of the third world developing capitalist countries and the impact of 'ideological' hegemony of the Western centres of capitalist power is felt when 'academics' stand in queue for foreign funds and grants for their researches. The 'foreign funding' is linked with the priorities of research which are defined and decided by the foreign donors. The richness of JNU is found in the clash of ideas and ideologies and intellectual struggles that have been undertaken by the JNU because of social concerns of the JNU intellectuals. JNU has never closed its doors and windows to any contradictory and confrontational struggle of ideas. JNU has been a headquarters of an open debate and dialogue but the themes and topics of intellectual contest were solely decided by the JNUites themselves. Academic autonomy has been a pillar of the value system of JNU and this legacy of JNU is under 'siege' by the recipients of foreign money for research on topics decided by the foreign donors.

The grand experiment of JNU can be defended only by those who are committed to philosophical values like democracy, pluralism, secularism, unity in diversity and socialism because the JNU was established with a view to protect and promote the 'basic structure' of secular democracy. JNU value system can be defended not only by pursuing the goals of intellectual excellence but also by linking intellectual pursuits of the highest order with moral philosophy which is sensitive to the concerns and needs of "The Wretched of the Earth". JNUites may be involved in lonely struggles but it is worth while to link "knowledge with the concerns of the under classes" and keep the JNU flag flying. This is the only university in India which had invited Balraj Sahani to deliver a convocation address and this is the only university in India which tried to create a national consciousness by bringing into sharp focus the "Politics of History" during the contentious years of Temple-Mosque Controversy or opposition to India asking for mega IMF loan in the 1980.

As anyone who has been to JNU knows, social commitment based on extremely high level of professionalism is the hallmark of the university.

Professor C. P. Bhambri,

Memories

In the formative days of JNU, it was not possible to implement the process of selection of faculty according to provisions of the JNU act. The selection of the faculty started with invitation by the Executive Committee of the university. I was among the early members of the faculty who joined JNU, School of Social Sciences, by invitation. Once I joined I was appointed as HOD (Chairperson), Centre for the Study of Social Systems, in early 1970s. JNU had a small office in the Vigyan Bhavan Annexe where the office of the Vice-Chancellor Prof. G. Parthasarathy, Planning Officer Prof. Moonis Raza, and a few invited professors were located.

Luckily the building premises opposite Ber Sarai village, the lower (old) campus was available for us and then we moved to that campus. This campus had several blocks some of which were converted into schools -- the School of Languages, the School of Social Sciences, and the School of International Studies and other blocks were converted into residence provided to members of the faculty.

My earliest memories of JNU are academic adventures and anticipation because of the challenges that we encountered in setting up the university system in consonance with the objectives of the JNU. We started with a very small faculty



and very close association and sustained interaction with one another. We were under pressure all the time from the press and parliament to deliver results. To some extent their pressure also gave us impetus and self awareness in regard to the challenges that were ahead and this was needed for innovative thinking and planning.



My memory of my time as the president of JNUTA brings back to me events from the recesses of my consciousness, of the pragmatic idealism which has imbued the thinking in the setting up of every single institution in JNU. The first meeting held for the formation of JNUTA was a brain storming session. There was a long discussion. It was realized, however, since every union/association promoted interest of the members, there may be a clash of interests among segments of the university population. Therefore separate associations should be formed for different segments of JNU community. In this meeting my name was proposed for the president and Prof. P. Das was secretary. Later on, during the regular election, I was elected as president and Prof. P. Das as secretary. I have very good memories of working in JNUTA, which contributed to the planning and conceptualization of the university structure, particularly faculty buildings and hostels etc.

The academic goal of JNU was to conduct research and teaching at a very advanced level of excellence, comparable to the best universities of the world, without missing the relevance and historicity of knowledge system of our own country. The JNU curricular structure, the admission policy (all India entrance test), the residential culture, the involvement of the students in academic processes of the centres, the reinforcement of the teaching with tutorials and co-curricular activities in hostels were major designs that realized the above objectives. Most of the objectives have been realized including emphasis on inter-disciplinary teaching as well. Primarily it was an available option for all the students to take courses from other centres/schools/disciplines, but in totality this area has not achieved the expected breakthrough. This issue still remains alive because some forward movement has been made by establishment of some schools which cut across disciplines in respect of teaching but at the faculty level, in research and interaction further movement is still to be expected.



My only message to the alumni association is my best wishes to all of them that they may succeed in the task they have undertaken with their high credibility and that this work has to be sustained.

Yogendra Singh, Professor Emeritus, Centre for the Study of Social Systems



THE NEAR FUTURE: JNU'S VISION

JNU is a leading national centre of excellence in higher education which is trying to rank among the top universities of the world. We, at JNU, believe in excellence with social responsibility and commitment, and wish to become a benchmark for Indian universities.

JNU has evolved mainly as a research oriented university with emphasis on post graduate teaching. Out of a total of 5506 on our rolls, 4631 are post graduate students. With hostels and residences of teachers built close together, the university's instructional and research programmes go beyond the classroom and normal office hours. JNU is now well recognized among world class institutions, the only Indian university to find a place in the global ranking of Institutes of Higher Education. A recent survey by Pergmann Press has placed JNU publications in the Sciences as the 4th most cited papers in the country. The University Grants Commission has also identified JNU amongst the few "University with Potential for Excellence". JNU has always been the leading Indian university, and perhaps among the best worldwide, in Social Sciences, International Relations, and Languages. The Admission policy and practice of JNU: for equity, access and quality has been rated as the "Best Practices" by National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration which has published it under its series of publication of Best Practices in Higher Education.

Marching ahead on this solid foundation, the University is concentrating upon some major, carefully identified teaching and research programmes which are also of relevance to national progress and development; programmes that will take JNU to new heights of excellence in the years to come. Recognising the emerging trends in social and economic systems (often simply referred to as globalisation and knowledge society) and the strengthening of interdisciplinary approach to knowledge creation and dissemination, new Research areas and activities are being launched.

The emerging deeper and stronger interdisciplinary character of research and teaching informs the new programmes in sciences, These include :

Launching of Nano-Science and Technology as a new major research and teaching programme integrating several aspects now being pursued separately by groups in School of Physical Sciences, Centre for Biotechnology, School of Environmental Sciences and School of Life Science. Another such integrating programme is the application of common computational approaches and tools to study a range of diverse systems encountered in real life situations ranging from traffic flows, stock market fluctuations to analysis of gene protein regulatory networks. This programme on Study of Complex Systems will bring in inputs from social sciences as well. A new framework of biological research with confluence of various disciplines of biology and physical sciences and mathematics, faculty members from the School of Life Sciences (SLS), School of Environmental Sciences (SES), School of Physical Sciences (SPS), and Special Centre for Molecular Medicine (SCMM) have come together to form an interdisciplinary group of researchers/educationists to pursue biological problems from the perspective of basic principles of physical sciences, especially of chemistry

Emergence of Knowledge Society and widening connectivity between diverse nations and social and economic systems informs the following new initiatives:

Research and Studies on emerging issues of Higher Education in Knowledge Society will find an important place in JNU; issues such as access and inclusion, diversity and excellence, gender, institutional and organizational transformation, financing and privatization, migration of knowledge workers will be taken up. Simultaneously the issue of changing structures and content of School Education and its linkages with higher education require will receive attention.

The changing role and nature of international economic institutions in the management of world economy in the dimensions of trade, environment, technology, knowledge and investments within the framework institutional economics, evolutionary economics along with conventional trade and development theories constitutes a key thrust



area of research and teaching. The hitherto neglected dimension of social sector is now acquiring an increasing recognition in International Economics (reflected for example in WTO and UN deliberations). New programmes will receive special attention to equip students to undertake holistic research in international economics incorporating this key social sector perspective. With increasing marketization of many services (and goods) traditionally provided by the state, it has become imperative to develop regulatory structures so that social objectives are still met and therefore economic regulation is being taken up as a key area of research and teaching in the context of a more liberalized international economic framework



Another new initiative to develop a programme on Holistic Epidemiology for Public Health at the university that could feed into the existing curricula in medical colleges and public health institutions in the country apart from contributing to the policy process and the quality of governance.

The increasing diffusion of Electronic Media resulting in wide spread connectivity has led to a research programme focussing on the study of issues of the relationship between media on one hand and social behaviour, political functioning, mobilization of public opinion etc. on the other. It would study the media as a source of critical examination of the Government policies and Society in all related aspects.



Necessity of Indian studies in humanities in a wider diverse national and international perspective has been recognised. This informs the following programmes.

In addition to contemporary Indian History, new initiatives would pay particular attention to situating the Indian experience in a comparative perspective other developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America as also of various advanced countries at a comparable stage of their development and by establishing new posts for non-Indian history (Contemporary, Global histories and East European, Asian, Modern Chinese, Latin American and African histories).

The study and research programmes in textual tradition will be expanded to develop expertise on Pali and Prakrit textual sources and other classical language & literary traditions such as in Tamil, Kannada and Telugu. The approach would be not to construct merely the historical meta-narrative but to also look at the historical record in terms of regional and local processes. The degree programmes in Hindi and Urdu and diploma in Mass Media will be expanded to cover other major Indian languages. International coverage would be by creation of a Group of Foreign Languages like Greek, Swahili, Hebrew Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Kazak, and Uzbek etc for a programme in culture studies as an interdisciplinary research at M.Phil/Ph.D level. Collaborative studies in Museum Studies and Comparative aesthetics is another new initiative.



Special mention should be made of an important Programme for the Study of Discrimination and Exclusion.

As invaluable inputs to research and education, the University proposes to set up archaeological and history museum, and other specialised resource units such as for Science & Technology Archival Record System, for Health Systems/Services Resource and Research.

The University is enhancing and modernising its educational and research facilities. The Science Instrumentation Centre is being strengthened and state-of-art audio visual and other teaching aids are being introduced. Wide spread adoption of e-governance and internet connectivity has become a must for JNU. A seminar hall with main auditorium with a capacity to seat 1200 people, with associated guest house of international standards will enable JNU to host many more seminars, conferences and workshops.

A full-fledged International Relations office is envisaged to take full advantage of Memorandum of Understanding and Academic Collaboration agreements signed with 90 universities.

Our building plans include annexes to most of our major Schools, as well as a hundred rooms residence for visiting faculty.



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For queries, projects, contact

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Alumni Association of JNU AAJ 2008

Panel discussions, Music, felicitations and dinner
5th to 8th November 2008

Date	Time	Venue	Event	Panelists
5 November	11:30 a.m.	SSS Auditorium	Discussion on "India's foreign policy: Available options"	Chair: Prof. Anuratha Cheny Panelists: Dr. B.R. Muthu Kumar IFS Mr. Anand Sahay, Senior Journalist Dr. Sujit Dutta, IDSA Prof. Brahma Chellaney Dr Prabir Purkayasta
5 November	5:00 p.m.	SSS Auditorium	Discussion on "Media, Culture and Society"	Chair: Ved Pratap Vaidik Panelists: Sohail Hashmi Udhay Shankar N.R. Mohanty Uday Prakash Pankaj Singh Shamsul Islam Susan Viswanathan Shambu Nath Singh Hemant Joshi Moderator: Devendra Choubey
6 November	11:30 a.m.	SSS Auditorium	Discussion on "Politics in India: Today and Tomorrow"	Chair: Prof. Pushpesh Pant Panelists: Prakash Karat, General Secretary, CPI (M) D.P. Tripathi, General Secretary, NCP Digvijay Singh M.P Moderator: Dr. Rizwan Qaiser

6 November 5:00 p.m. SSS Auditorium Discussion on "Challenges of Education in India today "

Keynote address: Prof. P.N.Srivastava, Ex Vice Chancellor, JNU

Chair: Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairperson, UGC

Panelists:
 Prof. Amitabh Maitoo, Vice Chancellor, Jammu University
 Prof. Shanta Sinha, Chairperson, National Commission for Children
 Ms. Poonam Natarajan, Director, ADI
 Prof. Chandra Bhusan, IGNOU
 Prof. Kamal Mitra Chenoy, President, JNUA
 Prof. Avijit Pathak, Sociologist

Moderator: Prof. Geetha B.Nambissan

7 November 5:00 p.m. SIS committee Room Discussion on "Crisis Economy "

Panelists:
 Prof. G.K. Chadha, Economic Advisor to P.M
 Mr. Sitaram Yechury M.P
 Prof. Asha Kapur Mehta, IIPA
 Mr.T.K. Arun, Resident Editor, The Economic Times
 Mr. Vivek Bharati, Executive Director, Pepsico India

Moderator: Dr. A.Prabakaran, Director, Public Action

8 November 11:30 a.m. SSS Auditorium Discussion on "Media: Needs self Regulation or State Control? "

Chair: Rahul Jalali

Panelists:
 P.R. Chari
 Amit Sengupta
 N.R. Mohanty
 Ranjana Kumari

Performances by
 *Madangopal Singh
 *Muthu Kumar
 *Manoj Pant
 *K.P. Vijayalakshmi
 *Manjushree Chauhan
 *Arnit Cowshish

8 November 6:00 p.m. Parthasarthy Open Air Theatre Music, Felicitation and dinner

Event Co-ordinator: Sabaree Mitra

AA J- 2008 Organizing Committee:

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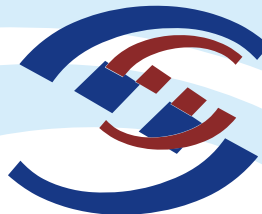
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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

ADMISSION INFO AT A GLANCE

The University will hold Entrance Examination in the middle of May 2009 for admission to various full-time programmes of study at various Centre spread all over India and in Kathmandu [Nepal].

CATEGORY 'A' - ADMISSION THROUGH ENTRANCE EXAMINATION:

M.Phil/Ph.D. in International Politics, International Organisation, Diplomacy and Disarmament, Political Geography; International Legal Studies; International Trade & Development; South Asian, Central Asian, Southeast Asian & Southwest Pacific Studies; Chinese, Japanese and Korean Studies; West Asian, North African and Sub-Saharan African Studies; Canadian, United States & Latin American Studies; European Studies; and Russian & Central Asian Studies, French, German, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Persian, Hindi, Urdu, Hindi Translation, English, Linguistics, Spanish and Japanese, Economic Studies and Planning; Historical Studies; Political Studies; Regional Development (Geography, Economics, Population Studies); Social Systems (Sociology); Educational Studies (Psychology, Sociology, Economics and History of Education); Social Medicine and Community Health; Studies in Science Policy and Philosophy, Life Sciences, Environmental Sciences, Arts & Aesthetics, Sanskrit Studies, and Law and Governance. **M.Phil/Ph.D. and M.Tech/Ph.D.** in Computer and Systems Sciences. **Pre-Ph.D./Ph.D.** in Physical Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Biotechnology, Computational Biology and Bioinformatics and Molecular Medicine. **MPH/Ph.D.** Master of Public Health. **M.Phil** in Portuguese. **M.Tech.** in Computational and Systems Biology. Master of Computer Applications (MCA). **M.A. in Politics** (with specialisation in International Relations). Economics (with specialisation in the World Economy), Geography, History, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, English, Linguistics, Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Russian, Spanish and Arts & Aesthetics. **M.Sc.** in Life Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Physics. **B.A. (Hons)** in Persian, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, German, Russian and Spanish (with entry points to both 1st and 2nd year).



CATEGORY 'B' - DIRECT ADMISSION TO PH.D. PROGRAMME:

The University admits a limited number of candidates directly to Ph.D. programme on the basis of their performance in viva voce examination (without Entrance Examination) both in Monsoon and Winter Semesters in most of the Schools/Centres of study.

CATEGORY 'C' - JRF HOLDERS:

The University also admits a limited number of candidates to M.Phil./Ph.D. and Pre-Ph.D./Ph.D programmes who have qualified a National Test entitling them to a JRF in Science disciplines [without appearing in the Entrance Examination] on the basis of performance of the candidates in viva-voce.

FOREIGN NATIONALS:

Every year foreign nationals are admitted to various programmes of study under the following categories

- (a) Self-financing Students
 - i) Through Entrance Examination
 - ii) through 'In Absentia'
- (b) Under the Cultural Exchange Fellowship Programme of Govt. of India.
- (c) As Casual Students to audit the courses (not leading to award of any degree)

Foreign nationals seeking admission in any of the categories under (a) and (b) above will have to satisfy the minimum eligibility criteria for admission to the various programmes of study as prescribed by the University.

(A) SELF FINANCING STUDENTS

(I) THROUGH ENTRANCE EXAMINATION:

Only those Foreign Nationals will be eligible for admission who fulfil the minimum eligibility requirements as prescribed for Indian students subject to equivalence of their degrees and production of Student Visa/Research Visa, as the case may be.

(II) THROUGH 'IN ABSENTIA' CATEGORY:

Foreign Nationals who are applying from their respective countries will be considered 'In Absentia' and there is a separate Application Form for them. They are required to mail Application Form (alongwith the copies of the certificates etc. on the basis of which admission is sought by them). Application Form can be had from the Deputy Registrar (Admissions), Room No. 28, Admission Branch, Administrative Block, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi - 110067 by sending a Bank Draft of US \$25.00 drawn in favour of JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY payable at NEW DELHI or can be



downloaded from our website www.jnu.ac.in. A Bank Draft of US \$25.00 drawn in favour of JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY payable at NEW DELHI is to be enclosed with the filled in downloaded Application Form towards the cost of application form.

(B) UNDER CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

The students seeking admission under the Cultural Exchange Fellowship Programme of Government of India are required to approach the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Azad Bhavan, I.P State, New Delhi-110001, India. In the event of their selection, the Council will be informed about their selection.

(C) CASUAL STUDENTS TO AUDIT COURSE (S):

Foreign Nationals may join the University for a semester or two to audit course(s) of any of the Centre of Study/Schools of Study. They will however, be not awarded any Certificate/Diploma or Degree.

In the event of their selection, candidates will be informed about their selection and their admission will be subject to the following conditions:-

1. Equivalence of their qualifications as prescribed by the University for Various Programmes of study.
2. Production of Student-Visa/Research Visa (as the case may be) in accordance with the revised visa policy of Government of India as also a xerox copy of their Passport together with the original documents for verification.

RESERVATION OF SEATS: University provides reservation to candidates belonging to SC, ST, OBC and PH categories as per norms prescribed for the purpose. All candidates who have passed qualifying examination prescribed for admission to the concerned programme of study from the identified backward districts, will be eligible for deprivation points. All Kashmiri migrants and wards/widows of certain categories of Defence Personnel will be eligible for deprivation points subject to their submitting a documentary evidence of their status. Only those candidates will be eligible for deprivation points as stated above who seek admission through Entrance Examination.

HOW TO APPLY: For details regarding availability of Application Form for admission to various programmes of study and other detailed information, the candidates may refer to JNU website: <http://www.jnu.ac.in>



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