

IN RETROSPECT

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HINDU COLLEGE

to,

Prof Daya Krishna,

With regards,

Kavita S. Sharma.

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Editorial Team:

**Kapila Vatsyayan
Kavita A. Sharma
Suroopa Mukherjee
Tapan Basu
Sunil Dua**



HAR-ANAND
PUBLICATIONS PVT LTD

HAR-ANAND PUBLICATIONS PVT LTD
D-9, Anand Niketan, New Delhi - 110 021
Tel. 4101983, 4101962 Fax : 011-5124868
E-mail: haranand@mantraonline.com
Website: www.har-anandpublications.com

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PRINTED IN INDIA

Published by Ashok Gosain and Ashish Gosain for Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd
and printed at Print Line, New Delhi.

Preface

In Retrospect is an attempt at putting together reminiscences of the life and times at Hindu College authored by individuals associated with the institution at different points during its hundred-year history. From Jiwan Lal Seth, who studied at Hindu College in the first decade of its existence to Imtiaz Ali, a Hinduite of the 1990s, principals, teachers, students and at least one member of the administrative staff have written about their experiences as members of the Hindu College community.

The list of the contributors to this volume is neither exhaustive (that in any case would never be possible) nor representative in any systematic manner. Nor is there a unifying vision informing the contributors. Rather, the contributions are remarkable for their eclectic character—some matter-of-fact and others sentimental, some sacrilegious and others reverential, some nostalgic and others futuristic.

As editors of the book, we have merely collected these pieces and arranged them chronologically – no more. The essayists express their own opinions, which are not necessarily ours. Our understanding, such as it is, may be gleaned from the “Introduction” which precedes the essays.

We wish to thank all contributors to the volume. Thanks are due also to members of the administrative staff of the college, especially Mr. Rakesh Sharma, Mr. Dinesh Kumar and Mr. Sunil Sharma for helping us prepare the manuscript within a stringent deadline.

Mr. Narendra Kumar of Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, deserves thanks for publishing the book.

The Editorial Team

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Introduction

Hindu College, Delhi, was established in 1899. There already was another college of the same name in Calcutta, the legendary institution now known as Presidency College. But Hindu College, Delhi, too, has generated its own share of legends in the hundred years of its existence.

The legends, in fact, antedate the founding of the college. Legend has it, for instance, that the family of Lala Shri Krishan Dass Gurwale, founder of the college, supplied eighteen boatloads of food and victuals to the rebel forces of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, in the course of the "Mutiny" of 1857. Subsequently, when the British Resident demanded of the family a cash donation for the war effort of the British against the 'mutineers', the demand was turned down by the head of the family (father of Shri Krishan Dass Gurwale) on the plea that the family was cash-crunched. Once the "mutiny" had been suppressed, the British Government penalised the Gurwale family for aiding the rebels by attaching a huge chunk of the family property. Thus ended the fabled affluence of the Gurwales, on the basis of which they were often referred to as "the Rothschilds of Northern India."

Incidentally, the Gurwales were an Agarwal family, which had acquired its wealth through trading activities and business transactions during the Mughal period. The appellation 'Gurwale' was popularly assigned to the family as the family used to provide 'gur' (jaggery) and water, free of cost, for horses and bullocks of the carts that brought agricultural merchandise for sale into the city of Delhi.

Shri Krishan Dass Gurwale probably imbibed the nationalist spirit of his family and this propelled him towards thinking about providing opportunities for a nationalist education at an affordable price to young men and women of his city. There was only one college in the city till then- the prestigious St. Stephen's College, also labelled the Mission college, which

had been started in 1881. The fee structure of this college was rather high, and many students, even though brilliant and anxious to pursue higher studies, were left in the lurch. There was, besides, a widespread feeling that St. Stephen's College catered to the requirements of students from well-to-do families and the elite classes that were not always sensitised to 'national' issues. Shri Krishan Dass Gurwale felt the lacuna greatly.

It was an era of economic hardship arising out of the two great famines of 1886 and 1889 that came in quick succession and the resultant inflation. But it was also a period of political mobilisation against the inequities and the injustices perpetrated by the British administration against ordinary citizens of India. The ideological battle against colonial authority had begun. Shri Krishan Dass Gurwale joined this battle by gathering together some close friends and stalwart residents of Delhi to start a new college, to be called Hindu College, under the aegis of a Hindu Educational Trust.

Among the objectives of the Trust were :

- (i) "to establish and maintain or to aid in the establishment or maintenance of educational institutions, primarily for Hindus and so far as it may not be inconsistent with these objects, for students of other creeds."
- ii) "in the case of Hindu students, to combine secular education with thorough religious instruction according to the teachings of the Sanatana Dharma, on non-sectarian lines."

These objectives doubtless smack of a chauvinistic and communal mindset, but if in principle they were so, in practice it was in their breach rather than in their observance that Hindu College acquired its true character. Right from its inception, the college admitted Muslim students along with Hindu students without any type of discrimination between the two. It would be interesting to note in this context also that the teaching staff of the college at the start consisted of four teachers, a Principal, a Vice-Principal (both Bengali gentlemen), a Pandit teaching Sanskrit and Hindi and a Moulvi teaching Urdu and Persian. To begin with, the two teachers, a Hindu Pandit and a Muslim Moulvi, each drew salary of Rs.25.00 a

month. A few years later, the salary was raised simultaneously in the case of both to Rs.50.00 a month.

Hindu College was set up initially in a small building hired in the historic Kinari Bazar area of Chandni Chowk in the very heart of the old city and the college started functioning with just 11 boys on its rolls. One of these eleven students was the late Sir Shri Ram who was later to become Chairman of the Governing Body of the College. Madan Mohan Malviya, the ardent nationalist leader, performed the inauguration ceremony in a dharamshala in Chehlpuri on 15th May 1899. The invitation letter to the ceremony, scripted in formal Urdu, was issued in the name of Shri Gurwale, and requested to grace the Gurwale residence with their presence on 15th May 1899 to witness the inauguration of the College. Noted nationalist leaders such as Lokmanya Tilak and Annie Besant extended their blessings to the project.

The following were the members on the managing committee of Hindu College when the College was established:

1. Rai Bahadur Lala Shri Krishan Dass Gurwale, Chairman
2. Lala Pyare Lal, Secretary
3. Rai Bahadur Lala Hardhyan Singh
4. Rai Sahab Girdhari Lal
5. Dr. Hem Chandra Sen (of M/s H. C. Sen and Co. Chemists)
6. Rai Bahadur Lala Sagar Chand
7. Pandit Din Dayal Sharma
8. Lala Hazari Lal
9. Lala Ram Chand
10. Lala Bhola Parshad
11. Lala Jawahar Lal

The beginnings were humble. The infrastructure was meager. The building was no bigger than a small residence house. There were no proper library arrangements for the students to study in their free time, no common room, no playgrounds. Of course the number of students at that time was not many and the classes quite few. Still, by any standard, facilities were insufficient. Students from other parts of the country also started joining the college as some parents could not or would not send their wards to the Mission College. Hostel arrangements had to be made and accommodation was added to the College for resident students later.

Soon, however, the College was shifted to a relatively extensive building in Kundewalan, Ajmeri Gate, which is currently occupied by the Sanatan Dharam Higher Secondary School. The facilities of library, hostel and laboratory were provided and the number of students went up to 45.

The total tuition fee collected in July 1899 was Rs.94/- and admission fee Rs.10/- making a total of Rs. 104/-. The monthly salary bill in 1899 was Rs. 254.50. This meant a monthly loss of Rs. 150/-, which had to be met from donations and contributions from a supportive public. An idea of the salaries and the number of staff of the College may be obtained from the following account statement in the ledger book of the college for the month of December 1899.

Principal B. N. Mookerji	Rs. 100.00
Babu N. N. Roy, Vice Principal	Rs. 80.00
Pt. Harnarayan Shastri	Rs. 25.00
Moulvi Mir Hufza	Rs. 25.00
Mr. Pearey Lal, Clerk	Rs. 12.00
Mr. Mangal Sain, Clerk	Rs. 07.00
Mr. Lachman, Chaprasi	Rs. 05.00
Sweeper	Rs. .50
Total	Rs. 254.50

The College gradually began to acquire popularity and the number of students on its rolls increased to 93 by the year 1902. Just then, however, the Punjab University issued strictures against the College and threatened to disaffiliate it unless it have a building of its own in a proper educational area. Lala Shri Krishna Dass Gurwale was now hard put to meet this demand of the University, for there was hardly any suitable building available for the purpose in the desired localities. It was the business community that came to the rescue of Hindu College. The indefatigable Lala Shri Krishan Dass ji appealed to the members of his own community and found a worthy ally in Rai Bahadur Lala Sultan Singh, an enlightened landlord of the city. The latter was easily persuaded to sell out part of his sizeable historic property

(originally belonging to Col. Skinner) in Kashmere Gate to house Hindu College.

By sheer coincidence, the new building of Hindu College was located just opposite St. Stephen's College, and had on one side a Mosque and on the other a Church. It was as if in its very situation the College was affirming its allegiance to a multicultural Indian society.

The College encountered severe financial crises in the early years. The number of students began to fall and the College started running into deficits. There was no government grant in those days. Hence the crises in finances at Hindu College continued up to 1904, with Lalaji every time loaning out money to it to tide over its difficulties until the amount thus loaned out rose to over Rs. 30,000/- which ultimately became his own 'gift' to the College. The total amount donated by him was Rs. 45,000/.

Lalaji managed to collect funds with the ungrudging help of the then members of the College Staff who went from door to door till at long last the College was put on a firm monetary footing. The staff had already taken on a unanimous decision not to draw their monthly dues as long as the finances of the College were in doldrums.

The business community of Delhi also rose to the occasion and the wholesale cloth merchants, as a guild, decided to collect two pice of bale of cloth that they sold and then make over the amount collected to Hindu College.

Upto the year 1917, the Principalship of Hindu College changed hands almost routinely, there being Shri. B. B. Mookerji, Shri N. N. Roy, Shri. P. B. Adhikari, Shri P. K. Basu, Shri S. Bhattacharya and Shri S. Sen, each staying for a period of three to four years at the most, with quite often the work being carried on by an Officiating Principal.

By 1925 Hindu College was no longer a fledging institution, it had grown considerably with the number of its enrolled students having increased to 700. It was now situated in a more capacious building in Kashmere Gate. It could now boast of a laboratory, a library and even a boarding house for its outstation students.

Hindu College had a well-etched out educational programme. It had been set up with a nationalist purpose in

mind and it had grown with the idea of providing a liberal, humanitarian education for the middle class. Students who joined the College in that period of time found the atmosphere less elitist than the neighbouring college, certainly more dynamic and non-conformist. As a co-educational institute it contributed to female education. The members of the staff, who had gone through the thick and thins of financial difficulties, were dedicated to the cause of spreading education in the face of immense hurdles. They joined in door to door campaigns and collection of donations. It became part of a larger purpose and gave Hindu College a characteristic fighting spirit. It was in 1922 that Delhi University was founded and Hindu College became affiliated to it. Thus it came to play a significant role in the formation and development of one of the premier Universities of the country, being one of its original constituent colleges. During the nascent stages of Delhi University, it was routine for Hindu College to support Delhi University by lending it every kind of academic and administrative assistance, including the loan of its redoubtable faculty.

In 1931 when Lala Krishan Dass ji died, his dream of setting up a non-sectarian College, with a fee that was low enough to encourage even the underprivileged section of society to join college had been largely realised. The student body was eclectic and varied. The 1935 issue of the college magazine 'Indraprastha' carries a profile of an old student that makes interesting reading:

"Thousands of students have come to this temple of learning and passed out of it. Out of those thousands of students, naturally, there has been quite a number of those who showed brilliant results at the University or were great successes in the social life of our college or distinguished themselves in their professional career. We intend to introduce them to all our readers. But for the present issue we have chosen Mr. Khub Chand, because he is still so fresh in our memory and his achievements too are of recent date. Mr. Khub Chand was born in 1911 in a small village named Khurd in the

district of Jhelum in a highly respectable family. The first university examination that bought him distinction was the middle school examination held in 1925 in Delhi. He then joined the Government High School, Delhi and continued to maintain his first position in every class. He stood first in first class in the matriculation examination and joined Hindu College in 1927. He passed the FA examination in 1929 from our college and again showed the same result. He also passed the BA honours examination from our college in history, 1931 standing first class first. In January, 1933 when he was just twenty-one years old, which is the minimum age prescribed for the examination, he competed for ICS in India and on his very first attempt topped the list. He then proceeded to England for undergoing probationary training at Oxford...."

No doubt Hindu College could boast of several such success stories. At the same time, it did encourage students to actively participate in the mainstream of national life and use the academic forum to do so. Many a student rejoined the college as a teacher and continued to contribute to its corporate life.

One such teacher Mr. J.N. Kapur recounts in his autobiography the 'choice' he made of joining Hindu rather than St. Stephen's:

"The Vice-Principal of my school advised me strongly to join Hindu College. 'By joining Hindu College, you would not get government posts, but you will be in the mainstream of national life. You can contribute to the freedom movement.' He gave me a letter of introduction to Prof. Ganpat Rai of Hindu College.... The contrast between the attitudes I met in the two colleges was remarkable. In St. Stephen's there was bureaucratic indifference and formality. In Hindu College, there was warmth and affection and appreciation for my academic

record. However, I felt there was no lack of warmth in St. Stephen's for students from public schools, sons of high government officials and those belonging to rich families. On the other hand, those students would have felt uncomfortable in Hindu College. I decided to join Hindu College and I have never regretted my decision. After I had beaten Delhi University records in BA and MA examinations, I met Principal Mukherji (St. Stephen's) as a member of the mathematics staff of Hindu College. He asked me 'Why did you not join St. Stephens College?'. I explained to him the whole incident... In fact, the treatment I received on first going to St. Stephen's College gave me some motivation to do so well that St. Stephen's should regret for not admitting me honorably. Alternatively, the warmth and affection at Hindu College made me have a feeling of obligation that the college should feel proud of me one day."

It was this combination of warmth and sense of participation that became the hallmark of a liberal education. Hindu College provided it in large measure. It also encouraged students to join a kind of political activism that was the sign of the era. Certain features of the institution itself were responsible for this kind of social activity. The College Parliament, founded in 1935, was one such feature, unique as it was to Hindu College alone. All students and teachers were members of the Parliament. The Prime Minister was elected from among the students followed by the Leader of Opposition. The Speaker was nominated from amongst the teachers by the Principal and he held the post in his capacity as the President of Hindu College Republic. The Parliament was the forum for discussing academic as well as other issues and provided excellent training ground for public speaking and leadership. Sometimes it even took up matters of college administration for discussion. A formal constitution had to be adhered to while the house was in session. Some distinguished debaters like Prof. Prem Chand, who held the post of Speaker for thirty

years, are remembered for their oratory and bold conviction even today. The Parliament was unique in another sense. It fostered in the students a sense of participation in the administrative running of an educational institution. Student members were elected to represent in all major administrative committees of the College.

The College had a Literary Union, a History Society, and a Music Society that regularly organised cultural events, debates, elocution, dramatic presentations and poetry reading sessions. Prof. Prem Chand trained boys and girls in the art of public speaking. The open-air amphitheatre provided the ideal setting for such students. It was the place where national feelings were honed through the art of discussion and debate. A Historical Society had been founded way back in 1919 but it discovered its true function in 1930. The need for a society that could advance a critical study of history as well as encourage research, lectures, essays, papers and historical tours was keenly felt. While the principal was the Patron and a history professor was chosen as the President of the Society, the students elected from amongst themselves the Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Some of the topics taken up for debate by the newly formed Speaker's Association in 1935 reveals the kind of progressive thinking the College encouraged at that crucial period of time. 'Socialism is the only means of attaining emancipation' and 'Co-education is essential in India at the present moment' are some examples. In 1934, Bazm-I-Adab, a society was set up in order to encourage the spread of Urdu literature. It organised mushairas and discourses on the works of major Indian poets. In the same year a Hindi Sahitya Sabha was started, followed by a Sanskrit society in 1939. No less prominent was the English Seminar Society and the Lotus Club opened largely to promote cultural links between India and Europe. Needless to say Hindu College provided the kind of setting that would encourage the right sort of national feelings.

In fact, the College played a prominent role in the freedom struggle by offering its premises for national leaders to address themselves to the student community. Some of the distinguished speakers were Lokmanya Tilak, Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Sarojini Naidu, M. A. Jinnah, S. N. Haji,

Shoukat Ali and Mohd. Ali, Moti Lal Nehru, Jawahar Lal Nehru and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel. Some noted Britishers who spoke at Hindu College were Annie Besant, Oswald Mosley and Pamela Mountbatten. Mahatma Gandhi visited the college on 2nd November 1929, just two months before the Indian National Congress passed the famous Independence resolution. Principal Dr. S. K. Sen presented a purse of Rs. 800/- to Gandhi.

Gandhi spoke fervently about the need to wear khadi. "You daily spend a great deal of money on unnecessary things. If a fraction of the same is saved for the service of your country, it would do tremendous good to you and the motherland.... The teeming millions of India can best be bound together in ties of love by the thread of the charkha, which will knit them together. The unity born of the charkha brings the prince and the poor, the lord and the labour on a par. It is true that khadi is costlier than foreign cloth, but would not one prefer the healthy and wholesome bread made by our mother to the biscuits manufactured by the Delhi Biscuit Co... I am happy to see that Hindu College has students of all castes and creeds. Men outside who break one another's head have gone made. Students should ever be the same. They should set an example to other leaders who keep the communal fire alive. I earnestly pray to the almighty to bless you."

It was under the influence of Gandhi's harijan movement that the students of the College started the Harijan Service League in 1932. Actively aided by G. D. Birla, the league worked out a number of plans to improve the living conditions of the untouchables. They included mass education, looking into the condition of slums and fighting against commonplace caste prejudices. Another society, the Tarun Samaj, provided the ideal forum for inviting prominent leaders to address and inspire the students. In 1930, in the month of March, Sarojini Naidu attended a function of the Tarun Samaj. In a riveting speech she said, "In a few years there will be no room left for communal wrangling or indication for stupid quarrels and watertight compartments. When Tarun Samaj would become Swaraj Samaj in free India it would cross even the narrow channels of nationalism. My

message to the youth is dream splendidly, dream proudly and without fear, but with every thrill of your dream remember that you are to give testimony of the acceptance of responsibility. In responsibility lies the glory of youth." Since Hindu College did provide the forum in which a vision of India that went beyond the narrow definition of nationalism was communicated to the young students, it was not at all surprising that the College played an active role in the freedom struggle.

The need of the hour was for educational institutions to lend a helping hand to the freedom movement. Hindu College was lucky that, at this juncture, the head of the institute was a man who was both a nationalist as well as gutsy. In fact, till 1917 the principalship of College kept changing with surprising regularity. Several principals were appointed, who carried on in office for two to three years and then left, so that the college was often run by officiating principals. At this point, a young lecturer from Dayal Singh College, Lahore was appointed. Shri N. V. Thadani was destined to run Hindu College for the next thirty years. His contribution to the development and growth of the College can hardly be doubted.

In 1926, he left Hindu College to take up the Principal's post in a college of his own district Sind, but by then a strong foundation had already been laid down for college. Luckily an equally able Principal was found in Prof. S. K. Sen, an Oxford Graduate from the department of History. He served the College till his untimely death in 1934. A gentle, unassuming man who was popular with both students and teachers, it was said that he died as he had lived - in harness, of a massive heart attack that struck him while he was addressing the students in the hall. Prof. Thadani returned to resume his responsibility once again. In many ways the College was to enjoy the most constructive and stable period in the years to follow.

Marked by a strong national feeling, Prof. Thadani was a brilliant orator who started the College Parliament and allowed societies like Tarun Samaj to become the hotbed of nationalist strategies. Hindu College actively aided demonstrations and hartals organised in Delhi, with a large number of teachers and students joining in the action. J.N.

Kapur recalls an incident with great clarity. "The second recollection is concerned with the Quit India Movement of August, 1942. The British government had arrested all the top political leaders. The student community of Delhi automatically marched towards Hindu College, since the students of the college were the natural leaders of the students' movement in Delhi. Within an hour 10,000 students had collected in and around the small park in the Kashmere Gate, opposite the Hindu College. A huge procession was formed and moved via Hamilton road and Chandni Chowk. We moved for four hours and decided to meet again the next day. We continued this for three days. On the third day, the police lost patience and fired at the students near Gurdwara Shishganj. The police and the British soldiers became quite panicky and intense patrolling in armoured jeeps was undertaken, especially near the Hindu College area. Next day I went to the college and was standing at the main gate entrance when a jeep with six British soldiers with all their guns pointing at me, approached the gate and asked me what I was doing there. I remember the fearlessness in those days. I told them quietly, 'I am in my college and you cannot enter here without the principal's permission. Better leave immediately.' They looked at one another and quietly went away. I was really lucky to be a student in those exciting days of our freedom struggle. The great values of service and sacrifice that I inhaled with every breath, have proved to be an inestimable acquisition of mine."

On June 13th 1906 the first book was accessioned to the Hindu College library. Interestingly enough it was a copy of the *Centenary Dictionary: An Encyclopedia Lexicon of the English Language*, a set of ten volumes, donated by Lala Chiranji Lal, a banker in Hissar. Till 1917 only 1545 books were added to the collection. By 1960 there were almost 29,000 books in the library. Given the paucity of funds, the growth of the library was slow and for a very long time a fully qualified librarian was not appointed. In 1924 a full time attendant was transferred from the laboratory to take care of the library. For a very long time the college had a closed access system which meant that the students were not allowed to rummage through the stack without assistance from the library staff and teachers. It did preserve the books though it denied the reader

the pleasure of browsing through the wealth of books. At the same time, it made the teachers far more involved in finding books for their students. It was only in 1967 that the open access system was introduced in the library. By then the number of books had multiplied and the new found freedom of opening cupboards and choosing one's own books was met with a lot of approval by students and teachers both. In the same year a fully qualified librarian was appointed. Right from the beginning the college could boast of a rich collection of priceless books in humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Many of them were rare, original editions published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The library also had an excellent reference collection that included general and subject encyclopedias, yearbooks, dictionaries and books in regional languages, bibliographies and gazetteers. In fact, the challenge of the hour is to protect these old books from hostile climatic conditions and termites.

An annual feature in College was the cricket match between Hindu and St. Stephen's, held with great gusto on the grounds outside Kashmere Gate (presently the Inter-State Bus terminal occupies the ground). There was always a large crowd to cheer the home team, which included students, teachers and a numbers of other people from the neighbouring district court. Cheering, beating of drums and general jubilation accompanied every single match. The rivalry between the two colleges, which was both ideological and political in terms of envisaging a future for India spilled onto the playing fields. No wonder, every single victory was acknowledged as a triumph of the winning spirit. The College had other teams, such as football, hockey and volleyball, but the glamour belonged to cricket right from the start. Much later, an ace table tennis team that included such players as Manjit Dua and Sudhir Phadke and a basketball team joined the ranks.

There was the lighter side to college life that gave it an air of easy camaraderie and friendliness. There were girls, though never more than one or two in a class. However, studying in a co-educational institution had its own charm. It gave vitality to classroom interaction and cultural events. It made the cause for higher education for women - championed ably by no less a man than Lala Shri Ram - an essential part of the ambiance

of the College. Besides the open air auditorium, where many a mushaira and ghazal night was celebrated and fiery declamations were held, there was the peepul tree, under which generations of students sat and shaped their future. There was also Banwari Lal, the man in charge of the cycle stand, a veritable source of all college gossip, who could be consulted by students on any and every matter. Anybody who came to college had to visit the nearby Mithan Lal Halwai's shop in order to taste the famous 'puri' and 'choley'. An equally favourite haunt for students was the Carlton Café where they often met over a cup of coffee.

In 1950 Principal Thadani retired and the mantle now passed to a member of the English department, Prof. A Bhattacharya. For the last few years of his tenure in College Dr. Thadani suffered from ill health that often incapacitated him. However, he never quite stopped being in charge of College. In the thirty years that he spent as the head of the institute he built it up brick by brick, giving it both direction and a special character. After his retirement the College changed - shifting to the University Enclave and entering into its post independence, more 'contemporary' phase.

In keeping with the spirit of the period, the Hindu Educational Trust (now renamed as the Hindu College Trust) now decided to drop from its list of objectives every clause that might associate it with a majoritarian Hindu bias.

It was under Prof. Bhattacharya's tenure as Principal that the Governing Body decided to shift the premises of the College to its current site - the university campus. The location chosen was near Metcalf House at the Imperial Avenue on the ridge. In what by now was an established pattern, funds were in short supply. Around 20 lakh rupees were raised through donations by the college, while a similar amount was contributed by the government.

By October 1953, the construction on the University campus, comprising the main -'E'-shaped - building along with a Hostel containing about 160 rooms, was completed. An Assembly Hall with a small stage was also constructed and in 1954, the College shifted to its new venue.

Unfortunately, Prof. Bhattacharya, who had taken such keen interest in the new building and actively helped in the

supervision of its construction, began to suffer from ill health, forcing his resignation in March 1958. Shri Raj Narain Mathur, who was appointed in July 1958, became the first old student to be made Principal of the College.

Another sad blow awaited the College. On January 11, 1963, Lala Shri Ram passed away. Born in 1884, Lalaji, as he was affectionately called, had been intimately connected with Hindu College since its inception in 1899. One of the eleven students who had joined the first year class in 1899, he had moved on to become the Chairman of Hindu College's Governing Body, from whence he had given a definite shape and direction to the college. Lala Shri Ram's contribution in the field of education was of course not restricted to Hindu College alone. He had served as the Chairman of Governing Bodies and trusts of many colleges in Delhi. His contribution to the course of higher education in Delhi is thus immeasurable. After Lala Shri Ram's demise, his son, Dr. Bharat Ram took over the office of Chairman, Governing Body of Hindu College, an office which he holds till today.

The pre-eminent role played by the College Governing Body was however curtailed during the 1960s when new rules were framed according to which the major share of funding for the College would come from the University Grants Commission (UGC) through the University of Delhi. Thus the University and the UGC began to exercise vastly increased clout in enforcing regulations and recommendations in the College.

Well into post-independence years, instead of being a self enclosed and cloistered academic space, Hindu College continued to remain a site for exposing the students to various socio-political concerns of the nation. Various eminent personalities from political and other public avenues continued to air their views through various forums in the College, leading to heavy and heady argumentation and discussion. In 1965, during the Indo-Pak war, the College contributed Rs.5000/- to the National Defence Fund.

In July 1966, shortly after Dr. B. M. Bhatia took over Principalship in 1964, the Assembly Hall was gutted by a fire caused due to an electrical short circuit. The demand for funds from the University Grants Commission took the shape of a

half-day strike organised by the students, culminating in a march to and demonstration in front of the Vice-Chancellor's office. The demonstration was led by the Principal, Dr. B. M. Bhatia, himself. Within a short span of twenty-four hours, the march met with positive results. The Secretary of the University Grants Commission agreed to release a grant covering 50 percent of the construction expenses. The enthusiastic zeal of the students (with even the old students pitching in), the teaching faculty, and the Principal himself, was able to raise up the remaining amount. Steps taken to raise funds even included a door to door collection of donations.

The result was that by 15th February 1970 the new auditorium was inaugurated by Dr. V.K. R. V. Rao. The stage of the present auditorium was designed by none other than Dr. Ebrahim Alkazi, the then Director of the National School of Drama.

It was also under Dr. B. M. Bhatia that the Joint Consultation Committee (JCC) was formed. This forum provided a much-needed space in which students could sit alongside members of the teaching staff and the administration to resolve any pending predicaments. This was an extremely useful and positive step in creating a democratic ethos within Hindu College.

During 1971-73, when Shri P. C. Sood had taken over for a short term as the Principal in lieu of Dr. B. M. Bhatia (who had taken study leave), the College made an addition to its main building - the Science Block.

On 15th February 1974, Hindu College celebrated its 75th Founder's Day. Considering the milestone that was being crossed, the celebrations were held in a surprisingly simple manner. In his speech, Dr. B. M. Bhatia (who had joined back in September, 1973), explicated that since "the country is facing an economic crisis, it becomes our duty to help it and bring it out from the crisis. That is why we decided not to waste any money and contribute what so ever we can in the service of the country."

In July 1977, Dr. B. M. Bhatia became Vice - Chancellor of Jodhpur University and Shri V. M. Bhatia who was Lecturer in Physics in the College was appointed officiating Principal.

But Dr. Bhatia returned after four months only to the College and continued at its helm till his retirement in August 1980.

Subsequently, Sh. P. C. Verma of the English Department was appointed Principal. Many development projects were undertaken during his tenure. The café was renovated, a sports complex was constructed, six classrooms were added and several staff quarters were built.

In terms of academic achievements, the College did well during those years. For the first time in its history, students of Hindu College were awarded the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship, not once but over three years - Animesh Srivastava, an Economics student, in 1984; Mahesh Rangarajan, a History student, in 1985; and Sanjay Chauhan, an Economics student again, in 1988.

It was during Sh. P. C. Verma's tenure as Principal, that the College sought to meet an emerging financial crisis - which has assumed gigantic proportion today - by creating three special funds - the Endowment Fund, the Development Fund, the Establishment Fund. These funds were set up with a view to encountering contingency expenditure in the wake of threatened stoppage of grants from the UGC.

Subsequent to Sh. P. C. Verma's retirement in 1995, Dr. S. N. Maheshwary, reader in Commerce of the neighbouring SRCC was appointed Principal. But his stint as Principal was short and he resigned from his post in 1997.

Dr. Kavita A. Sharma, the current principal, took over as Principal of the College in January 1998. In doing so, she became the first lady Principal of a co-educational College in the University of Delhi.

The College celebrated its Centenary with much pomp and show in February 1999 with the Prime Minister of India himself inaugurating the celebrations and issuing a postage stamp to mark the occasion. As we conclude the Centenary celebrations coinciding with the end of this century, the enterprise initiated by Shri Krishan Dass Ji Gurwale in 1899 continues to meet the challenges of higher education.

Jiwan Lal Seth*

Dr. P.K. Sinha and Dr. V.P. Nagpal interviewed
Shri Seth at his residence in Darya Ganj, Delhi

- PKS I am Dr. P.K. Sinha from the Zoology Department of Hindu College and he is Dr. V.P. Nagpal from the Physics Department of the College. We would like to ask you some questions regarding your stay in Hindu College. You are Mr. Jiwan Lal Seth?
- JLS Yes - I am.
- PKS When were you in Hindu College?
- JLS I joined in 1918.
- PKS And you were there for how long?
- JLS Well - in between I had gone over to Kashmir. So, I continued upto 1924.
- PKS You did a law course?
- JLS Mr. Sahni was our English teacher. He had joined Law College in 1925. He was Warden of the College. He moved over from Hindu College.
- PKS So, he inspired you to join the course?
- JLS In fact, I had no intention to join Law. He called me at his house. I got a post-card from him asking me to see him at once. It was a one-line post-card. I went to meet him at once.
- VPN Who was the Principal during your stay in the College?
- JLS Mr. N.V. Thadani.
- VPN Do you have any recollection of Hindu College of those days? Any incident which you can narrate?
- JLS Mr. Thadani was a strong man. He managed the affairs of the College very well. He used to have meetings with Principal Mukarji of St.Stephen's College. Mr. Mukarji was a very assertive Principal. They were two opposite colleges. Both of them were at Kashmere Gate.

**Student in Hindu College, 1918-24.*

- PKS What exactly was the attitude of the students and the staff regarding the College across the street i.e. St. Stephen's. Was there a feeling of competitiveness?
- JLS Yes.
- PKS But you used to have games/sports which you liked to play - cricket, football?
- JLS I played mainly football.
- VPN You were a member of the College team?
- JLS Yes, I was the Captain. I was a footballer from Ramjas High School.
- VPN Did you play against St.Stephen's College?
- JLS Yes.
- VPN And you also played for Delhi University?
- JLS Yes. When I was taken to Law College by Mr.Sahni, I was taken mainly by him to play for the Law College. In one match I broke my knee. I went against a footballer of St.Stephen's College. My own man also ran and he dropped on my knee. Since then, it is broken although I consulted doctors.
- VPN You continued to play football even after that?
- JLS No. In fact I joined one or two matches after that and they used to take me as a good player and then I had to withdraw myself.
- VPN Was there a College Union formed during those days?
- JLS Students' Union.
- PKS What are your recollections of students of those days? What was expected by the students?
- VPN Did they want to get a good job after their studies or they wanted to do some business?
- JLS Well. There were several types. Some were interested in further studies.
- VPN Was there no other college besides Hindu College and St.Stephen's around in the city?
- JLS No.
- VPN How about Delhi College.
- JLS DILLI COLLEGE KA AAP NE NAAM SUNA THA?
- JLS It was subsequently named as Delhi College. It was Arabic High School.
- VPN Where was it located at that time?
- JLS It was outside Ajmere Gate.

VPN Besides these three colleges, any other college that you had heard of?

JLS I do not think there was any other College.

PKS Mr. Seth. There was a lot of political upheaval at that time. So what was the involvement of students in politics?

JLS Students were interested in politics. In our college, Mr. Thadani invited Mr. Jinnah to deliver a speech. Jinnah was a great politician. So, he made the speech and there was a big gathering.

PKS This was in the year?

JLS It must be around the year 1923-24.

PKS What other recollections do you have about other great political leaders? Had Mahatama Gandhi come?

JLS M.K. Gandhi, I do not think he came.

PKS Any one else.

JLS Mahatama Gandhi was in Delhi and he used to stay with the Principal of St. Stephen's College.... I am forgetting his name..... Mr. Mukarji mainly conducted the affairs of the College.

VPN Was there a hostel in the College?

JLS Yes.

VPN How many students were there?

JLS My father had built a 4-storeyed house at Dufferin Bridge at the turn of the market.

VPN How many students were there in the hostel at that time?

JLS Mr. Thadani had given one floor of the building for the hostel for the students and that building was burnt down in 1942 by the rioters.

VPN So in all how many students were there in the College at that time?

JLS I am not sure of the number.

VPN Approx.... 200, 300.... or more?

JLS Must be more.

PKS How many departments were there at that time - how many subjects were there?

JLS All the subjects.

PKS Including all the sciences?

JLS Not all the sciences.

PKS Physics, Chemistry, Biology?

JLS Yes upto M.Sc. Maths. Statistics, also.

PKS In the Arts subjects, History must have been there?

JLS Yes, there was History. Professor Ganpat Rai was there in History.

PKS Do you remember any of the teachers of the English Deptt.?

JLS There was one.... Mr..... a Bengali teacher.. a very good teacher who came from England. I am forgetting his name. Mr. Thadani was also an English teacher.

VPN Were there any other activities in the College?

JLS Yes, drama used to be there.

VPN Did you take part in any other activities besides studies and sports?

JLS I had some pain in the leg but inspite of that I used to play. There was one Pandit Har Narain Shastri - a Hindi Professor.

PKS Sanskrit department was also there?

JLS Yes.

VPN Was the medium of instruction Hindi or English?

JLS English.

VPN Were the examinations held by the College or the University?

JLS University examinations used to be held.

VPN Do you know that the University was established in 1922? Was Hindu College affiliated in 1922 or later? Did you get your degree from Delhi University or from Punjab University?

JLS I got my matric from Punjab University and then I got my degree from Delhi University.

VPN The College must have been affiliated to Punjab University before it became part of Delhi University?

JLS Yes.

PKS What was the relationship between the students and teachers at that time?

VPN Did you ever visit any teacher's home?

JLS No.

PKS Was the attitude informal or were the teachers formal?

JLS No. It was very good. Those were very good days.

VPN & PKS Thank you very much, Mr. Seth. Thank you for the interview.

Khub Chand*

It is 65 years since I left the Hindu College. Much has changed since the mid-thirties. We were then housed in a modest building in Kashmere Gate and commuted on bicycles or ekkas. Also, the college did not have the distinction of having any lady professors. Today, it is truly co-educational and celebrates its Centenary with Dr. Kavita Sharma as its Principal. In my time we had hardly any lady students - the Principal, Dr. S.K. Sen, had no hesitation in keeping up with the spirit of the times in fining the whole class one rupee each for the offence of a mischievous lad leaving a bunch of flowers on the desk occupied by the solitary girl in the History (Hons.) class. Of course, the fine was never actually added to our tuition bills.

The nation was then struggling for independence and the student community on several occasions marched up and down Chandni Chowk shouting "Simon Go Back". Since only a few students at the front and the back of the procession were arrested many of us did not land in politics.

Academic excellence was then the objective of both students and their professors. There were no strikes and mutual relations were marked by respect and affection. The national scene has been radically transformed and we need a new leadership of character, integrity and pragmatism. The Hindu College will assuredly continue to mould successive generations and prepare them for the all important task of national reconstruction.

**Student in Hindu College, 1927-1933.*

Bhiku Ram Jain*

It is a matter of great satisfaction and pride for me that Delhi University of which I was a student is celebrating its Platinum Jubilee. The University has a glorious record of achievements in all fields of activities and is bound to become a centre of excellence for higher education.

I am proud of the fact that I was a student of Hindu College, Delhi from 1931 to 1935. I joined Hindu College after my matriculation. It used to be a four-year graduation course in those days. Unfortunately, in the final year I got sick and could not take the examination. Hindu College in those days was situated at Kashmere Gate just opposite St. Stephen's College. While the latter, St. Stephen's, catered to the elite of Delhi Society; Hindu College was "Janta College" in today's terms. It was, as a matter of fact, considered to be a nationalist College. Hindu College in those days was a center for intellectual debates concerning India's freedom struggle. In fact, many national leaders like Lokmanya Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak, Annie Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Sarojini Naidu, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and Jawahar Lal Nehru visited the College to inculcate among the young students the feeling of nationalism and inviting their active participation in the freedom struggle.

In those good old days, there used to be regular interaction among the students of Hindu College and St. Stephen's College as they met for breakfast at the Mithan Halwai's shop. I still remember the delightful and satisfying taste of "Bermi" with a glass of sweet Lassi and "Halwa", all costing 4 annas in all. There used to be a long queue of students from both Hindu and St. Stephen's for this breakfast.

I had the privilege of having during my tenure as a student, two excellent Principals- Mr. S. K. Sen and Mr. N. V. Thadani. They contributed their entire mite in the

**Student in Hindu College, 1931-35, subsequently Treasurer, Governing Body, Hindu College, 1967-97.*

development of the College both in terms of academic and extra-curricular activities. Of course, the College did not have an auditorium to cater to different activities. However, we had an amphitheatre of the Roman type and all activities used to be conducted there. It was a centre for morning prayer, student's parliament, and variety functions and also for holding classes. The side where the inter-state bus terminal is housed at present was used as Cricket and athletic grounds. Football used to be played where the Laddakh Budh Vihar is situated presently on the bank of the river Yamuna. The College also had a Boat club and occasionally, we used to have a nice ride down the Yamuna after bunking our classes.

After leaving college, I joined my family business. However, my interest in the University continued. I have been a member of Delhi University Court and Council for several years. I continue to enjoy that privilege even today. As a member of the court, I have a strong feeling that it should meet more often than once and function as a more effective body for exercising overall influence for an all-round development of the University. It is also gratifying that besides being Chairman of several other Colleges I was the Treasurer of Hindu College Governing Body since 1967 and I have contributed in my own humble way to the development of the college for 30 years. This has given me great satisfaction. It is one of repaying my debt to the institution, which helped me to become a better and worthy citizen of this great country.

Though I have crossed 80, I still feel young when I come to the University campus and particularly Hindu College. On each visit to the College and University campus, I am reminded of many memorable events. I will never forget those beautiful years of my life that I spent at Delhi University. I still fondly remember my helpful Colleagues, inspiring teachers and all the beautiful memories of my life at Delhi University.

I have, in fact, been taking interest in Politics as a Congressman; having been elected to the erstwhile Delhi Municipal Committee two years before the country attained independence. Thereafter I was a member of the Municipal

Corporation till the year 1967 when I became an Executive Councillor in charge of Finance in the Metropolitan Council of Delhi.

I was elected as a Member of Parliament from Chandni Chowk Delhi area in the year 1980.

K. G. Khosla*

The celebration of Hindu College Centenary in 1999 was a unique occasion and brought great dignity to its present and past students. Hindu College has served the field of university education in an impressive manner. The function of 1999 presided over by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a feather in the cap of this old well established college in the country.

I passed out of this College after graduation in Science in the year 1936. Although I have been out of this college for nearly 63 years, still the memories of those days are fresh in my mind. The Principal Mr. N.V. Thadani was a pillar of strength to the College in those days. As I was one of the restless boys in the class in the third year in 1934, on a cloudy day when Mr. Thadani was taking our English class some of my friends asked me to request him to go for a picnic. I rose and said "Sir, it is a nice day. Can we take off from your class for the day?" He replied back politely, "You are at liberty to leave the class". I knew that I had made a mistake because he meant that I had no right to represent the class. I had to walk out from his period and felt sorry for this incident.

In another incident in my fourth year, when Dr.D.K. Kothari had just taken over as Professor of Physics in the Delhi University where we had our B.Sc. classes, I sat at one of the back benches and threw a paisa on the table in front of the Professor. He looked up but could not identify who had thrown the paisa. Then I threw one more paisa on the table and he noticed me. He said nothing. After the class was over he said, "Can I request you for a little talk?" He merely said that he was at my disposal for any questions or problems that I may have about the subject whenever I chose. His politeness flattened me and I offered an apology without his asking.

*Student in Hindu College, 1932-36.

There were some very interesting incidents during college days. We had one Professor Basu who had a very funny accent and pronunciation. When he took the roll call he read out the numbers as follows :

Forty was pronounced as Farty
Forty One was pronounced as Farty Bhun
100 was pronounced as Bhun Geero Geero
110 was pronounced as Bhun Bhun Geero
111 was pronounced as Bhun Bhun Bhun.

Our competitors, St.Stephen's College, had a Physics Professor called Prof.Sant Ram. He was known for his funny English. He would say in the class when angry, "both of you three gets up on the bench". Another famous expression by him was "the water rises down and falls up".

As I was outstanding in General Knowledge, in one of the examinations by the University, I was awarded Rector's Prize which was the highest prize in the University for General Knowledge. Mr. Rector was the Chancellor of Delhi University. There were lot of books and some other gifts.

In my class in F.Sc. (I.Sc.) we had four girls. There were girls also in the college. They had a separate room for themselves to sitdown in. Whenever they had to attend the physics class, Professor Puri would first go to this room and stand outside. When these girls came out they would accompany him to the class room and sit on the front bench. After the class they were escorted by Professor Puri into their room. They had no occasion to fraternise with the boys.

Our playground was outside the Kashmere Gate area where I played tennis regularly. I was a member of the tennis team and played a few matches. In my fourth year I took private tuition from one Prof. Mukherji who used to stay at Mori Gate. The time given by him to me was 4 P.M. to 5 P.M. Whenever I went to him on motor cycle, I reached 5 minutes before 4 P.M. and had to wait outside his door. If I reached 5 or 10 minutes late, Prof. Mukherji would terminate his coaching exactly at 5 P.M.

One of the privileges I enjoyed during my college days was a gift from my father of a B.S.A. 2.5 hp motor cycle. I was the

second boy to have a motor cycle in the college. It was purchased from Sikand & Co., a small shop in Kashmere Gate.

T.P. Pall was a leading photographer at Kashmere Gate. At that time I had a post card size camera for which I used to buy films and other accessories from his shop. I used to take good photographs for which I got a prize from the college. I had learnt to develop negatives and make prints at home.

As I look back today on the many achievements of my life, I feel that much of what I have achieved was due, in large measure, to my training at Hindu College.

K.K. Birla*

I am glad to know that Hindu College, Delhi, celebrated its Centenary in February, 1999 and that to mark this occasion, a volume of articles is being brought out which will contain reminiscences of the college days by old students of Hindu College. I have been asked to contribute an article for this occasion.

Hindu College of Delhi is, in fact, known for its excellence as a centre of higher studies throughout North India. That this college has completed 100 years of its pre-eminent existence is, therefore, a matter of pride and joy to all the Hinduites. Since I have had the privilege of studying in Hindu College for two years, I am delighted to contribute this article to the Centenary commemorative publication.

I was a student of Hindu College from 1935 to 1937 and did my Intermediate in Science from the Delhi University. In those days the final examination of schools was the Matriculation Examination. I passed Matriculation from Calcutta University in 1935 standing 11th among 25,000 students, obtaining 81.3 per cent marks and distinction in five subjects.

My place of residence had shifted from Calcutta to Delhi in 1933, but as the syllabus of Delhi University was different from that of Calcutta University, I continued to study for the Matriculation course of Calcutta University. I took the examination as a private candidate.

My father, the late Shri G.D. Birla, did not believe much in the efficacy of university degrees under the then prevailing education system. He believed more in all-round education through self-study under the guidance of eminent teachers. Father further desired that students should acquire some knowledge of Sanskrit which was and is still regarded as "Dev Bhasha" and in respect of which, it was thought, and rightly too, that every literate Hindu should have a working

**Student in Hindu College, 1935-37.*

knowledge. For this reason, father felt that instead of striving for a degree of a university, home education would be much more effective. Father thought that in the existing system of education the effort of the student was expended only in somehow passing the examination without acquiring knowledge of the subject of study. I, however, was keen to join a college. I, therefore, persuaded father to permit me to join a college in Delhi, where I was residing with him. Father was liberal in his views and so left the decision to me. That is how I came to join a college for higher studies. In fact, I was the first member of our family to have joined a college.

The first question that came up for my consideration was in which college in Delhi I should seek admission. At that time there were three well-known colleges in Delhi - St. Stephen's College, Hindu College and Ramjas College. It was generally regarded that St. Stephen's, run by missionaries, was the best. Normally, therefore, I would have joined St. Stephen's College, but there was one crucial factor to be considered before finalising the decision. During the days of the British Raj, an important consideration for me was to see which college had the reputation of being a college conducive to the growth of nationalistic outlook and which had a pro-Raj leaning. I had no doubt in my mind that whatever might have been the attitude of the college authorities of St. Stephen's towards our struggle for independence, all its students were as patriotic as those who studied in other colleges. All the same, Hindu College had a better reputation as far as a nationalistic outlook was concerned. After taking into account this aspect, I decided to join Hindu College.

In my days, the majority of college students used to put on neckties and dress in Western style. Our family had not taken to wearing neckties which were considered to be emblems of the British or the Western way of life. I, therefore, went to the college in closed-collar coat and trousers.

The first day in college was reserved for ragging even during those days. The senior students, particularly those of the second year, always thought it their privilege, as they do now, to tease or rag or make fools of the freshers. I, therefore, went to the college fully prepared to get ragged. Fortunately I did not experience any ragging worth its name. As I wore a

closed-collar coat, there was no buttonhole in it. I, therefore, used to place a flower in the top pocket of the coat. On the first day at the college I had kept a rose in the pocket as usual. The only ragging that I received was from a senior student who said the flower was a pretty rose and snatched it away. This student repeated the same action for another two days. I considered this mischief to be his prerogative. This discomfiture, however, was inflicted on me for three consecutive days. I thought the boys were quite 'merciful' towards me and so I did not object to my rose being snatched away for three days in a row. After that the teasing stopped and life in college became all staid.

I studied in Hindu College for two years and did my I Sc from there. My subjects were Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, along with English. In my final examination of Inter Science, I did not get as high marks as in my Matriculation. Perhaps the standard of marking in science subjects in Delhi University was very strict. In the 1st and 2nd year I was regarded a good student but certainly not good enough to be amongst the top few. When, however, the results of I Sc were announced in 1937, it transpired that I stood 6th in the University, much to the surprise of my teachers, and even of myself! I believe amongst the students of the Hindu College I stood 2nd. When I met some of the teachers after the results were declared, they were all pleased with my performance and congratulated me.

I would have done much better in the University examination and perhaps secured 1st and 2nd position but for a problem. Father wanted that, apart from college studies, I should spend two hours every day on acquiring business knowledge. After giving me some basic training, he made me the Managing Director of a hoisery factory in Delhi belonging to my brother-in-law, which my brother-in-law could not manage owing to his being in Calcutta, while the factory was located in Delhi. But for this divided attention I have no doubt I would have done much better in my I Sc Examination.

Hindu College had a system of awarding scholarships to all the boys who got admitted on the basis of marks that they obtained in the Matriculation Examination irrespective of the university from where they passed. As it happened, with my

81.3 per cent marks in the Matriculation examination I was regarded the best student admitted in the 1st year and so was awarded a scholarship of Rs.20 per month, which was quite a handsome sum of money in those days. Considering that the rupee has depreciated one hundred times since then, this scholarship of Rs.20 would be equal to a scholarship of Rs.2,000 per month at present.

I was not feeling easy in my mind at receiving the scholarship. I consulted the other members of the family and all of us felt that I should certainly accept this scholarship from the college and then pass over the amount to some poor student of my class. This is what I did for the next two years that I was at college.

Hindu College was a co-educational institution but very few girls in those days went in for university education. Whereas the number of boys studying in my class was over 200, my own roll number being 211, the girls in my class were only three. There was a separate room for the girls where they could relax when they did not have any class to attend. Although there was co-education, the boys and girls never talked to each other; at least in Hindu College they kept aloof from each other. That the boys never misbehaved with the girls, I attribute to the prevailing culture of the country as well as the influence of Mahatamaji and Panditji. In my two years at Hindu College there were perhaps only one or two instances when some boys tried their hand at eve-teasing, but they were immediately thwarted in their attempts by others who intervened and made it clear that they would have none of it.

After a few weeks at the college I discovered that the standard of teaching in Hindu College was good. In Chemistry, Professor Arjun Lal Agarwal was the Head of the Department. For Physics, Professor A.N. Puri and for Mathematics, Professor Shree Ram were excellent teachers. Puri Saheb and Aggarwalji also wrote text books from which they taught us. Professor Shree Ram did not write any book but was a very good teacher. He was a very strict disciplinarian. All the students feared him. Every science student had to attend practical classes more specially in Chemistry. For the practical

classes there were two demonstrators, Professor Hriday Narayan and Professor Bansi Lal.

For English there was Professor Shambhu Dayal. He was a good man but as a teacher he was just passable. The Head of the English Department was, however, one Professor Bhattacharya, an excellent teacher and a very scholarly person. That apart, he was a perfect gentleman. He taught the higher classes but occasionally would take lectures for the 1st and 2nd year students also.

My experience has been that a strong man who is also a stickler for correct behaviour always becomes popular. Professor Shree Ram therefore, in spite of his strictness and in spite of the awe in which he was held, was very popular among the students. Professor Puri was also a strong man but side by side he was a very special person and mixed freely with the boys. He was not feared but he too could enforce instant discipline. A man with a pleasant personality, he was probably the most popular teacher in the college. He was very fond of me. Even after he retired he would sometimes invite me to have tea with him. He continued to do so till the early 80s. After that I did not hear from him. I presume he must have passed away. As I had been his student, I always addressed him as "Sir" even after his retirement. By that time I had acquired some name and position in the industrial world. Professor Puri knew about it and pressed me not to call him "Sir" any more. This, however, was resisted by me and I continued to address him as "Sir" every time we met.

In those days Professor Thadani was the Principal of the College. He was an excellent speaker and was held in high esteem by all the students. He was an able administrator too.

From time to time the College authorities would invite eminent people for lectures. Such people would either be educationists or eminent political figures. I do not remember the names of all those who were called on such occasions but I do remember that once Shri Bhulabhai Desai who was a very able parliamentarian and an eminent lawyer of the country was invited to speak. He spoke well.

While I was studying in Hindu College, Smt. Kamla Nehru, wife of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru died. The entire country was

plunged in sorrow. A holiday was declared in Hindu College and a condolence meeting held in the college campus.

To acquaint the boys with the trends in our political life there used to be held a dummy Parliament session in the College where some boys played the roles of members of the cabinet. There was a 'Prime Minister' too. Questions were put to the Prime Minister and his team and members of the cabinet would reply.

Whenever a new Professor arrived the boys would chalk out their strategy of how to deal with him - a kind of orientation for him. Even before the arrival of the concerned Professor somehow or the other boys would ferret out information about whether or not he was a good teacher, whether or not he was a disciplinarian. In case the Professor was a strict teacher, the boys behaved well and respectfully cooperated with him. However, if they came to know that the new teacher was of a weak character, then the students would play all types of tricks and would even become aggressive in disturbing his classes. They would taunt the new teacher in every possible manner and sometimes go to any length to let loose bedlam in the classroom.

I remember an incident when three new teachers were appointed by the college management. Before they joined their duties, the boys called them Mr. X, Mr. Y and Mr. Z. The teachers Y and Z were alright and were tolerated. X was regarded a weak person. He was one Professor Gupta. He was a teacher of English and was an Oxonian. His English was excellent. Unfortunately, he could not control the class and so the boys would always pull his leg. One boy, for instance, asked him why his name was Gupta and not the straightforward simple Gupta. All the boys then joined in a chorus in questioning him about his name and its origin. Some would ask why he did not change his name to Gupta. This was all in fun! However, after some time Professor Gupta got fed up and decided to leave the College. I was unhappy that he had to leave because he was an excellent teacher, but Professor Gupta knew that he would not be able to command the respect of the students and so he had no option but to leave. I felt sorry for him and so met him and advised him that

whichever institution he joined in future, he should remain strict.

There was a standing rivalry between Hindu College and St. Stephen's College. Once I remember a three-day cricket match was organised between these two colleges. The boys would come as usual to the college and ask the day be declared a holiday so that they could watch the cricket match. Since it was a three-day match all the three days were declared holidays. The ground where the cricket match was played was at some distance from the college premises and one had to go on a cycle to reach it. Many boys who came on cycles would offer to carry others on their carriers to the venue of the match.

I remember on the second day of the match when I was going seated on the carrier of a cycle towards the cricket ground to watch the match, my father happened to come in his car from the opposite side. He was surprised to see me seated at the back of a cycle. He stopped his car and asked me what the matter was and why I was not attending classes. I explained to him the reason. Everything went off well thereafter.

Just outside the Hindu College gate there was the shop of a Halwai. There was also a Cafeteria attached to the College. The boys were very fond of going to the Cafeteria which I also visited at times. The food was good but more than the Cafeteria I would visit the "Halwai" shop and take "Lassi" there every day. The "Halwai" made excellent "Lassi". Many other boys too would join me for drinking "Lassi". I would act as the host.

My two years at Hindu College were happy times for me. During my days student life was comparatively placid. Their only worry was that they should do well in the examinations. I was fortunate in that I enjoyed the confidence of my teachers as well as the warmth of my fellow students. What more could I desire? Now when I look back, visions of those happy days in Hindu College often come floating before my eyes like memories of a dreamland of abundant joy in the midst of books, innocent laughter and good companions.

R.R. Gupta*

I joined the service of Hindu College in the Department of English in a temporary appointment sometime in 1936. Dr.N.V.Thadani, had been my teacher for four years at Ramjas College, Anand Parvat. A little before I sat for the MA final examination he left Ramjas College for a second stint as Principal of Hindu College after the death of Principal Sen. My appointment in Hindu College was by his grace and with the support he got from the Chairman of the Governing Body. Some member of the Governing Body had objected to my appointment on the ground that I was an ex-political convict. In those days it was easier to get "God" than to get a job. To be a student of Hindu College was a matter of pride; to be a lecturer there was enviable.

At the time of leaving Ramjas College, a sort of family, I sought the blessings of Mr.B.B. Gupta, who was not only my teacher, but a "friend, guide and philosopher", an all-in-all to me. He exhorted me, "live for your students". God alone knows how far I was able to obey and carry out the exhortation. I served the College for a little over forty years. This was the best period of my life; and it was because of my service here that I was able to give my own children university education. I can never repay the debt I owe to Hindu College and, in a greater measure, to Dr. Thadani for whom I felt a filial reverence and gratitude. Forty years is a long enough period to store hundreds of memories on the computer of your brain. I shall record here a few of them.

The very first day of my joining Hindu College, I went to the library to issue a textbook. A student spoke out, "They don't issue textbooks." I replied, "Yes, they don't issue to students". I was only twenty three then and, I think, quite handsome and smart-looking, with no aura of a teacher about me. The boy again said, "You are not a student of this college,

**Teacher in the Department of English, Hindu College, 1936-77.*

then you cannot get a book at all." I felt amused. Hargovind, the library attendant, told the boy that I was not a student but a professor. College teachers in those days were called professors.

Quite a few years later, I was one day taking a class. A few students, who came after the roll call, were refused entry. Teachers in those days could maintain discipline because we were not as "civilized" then as we have grown today. The whole group of girl students was absent but they turned up after about fifteen minutes. It was an embarrassing and tense situation. The students waited to see if I disallowed the girls too. With my sense of discipline, I disallowed them too. The next day I was called to the Principal's office and told that he had received a complaint against me from the girl students. I was dumbfounded and felt as if my breath had suspended for a few seconds. Collecting myself, I asked what it was and learned that the girls had complained that I was rude to them. I felt relieved as if life had come back to me. Though to be rude to anybody was not in my character, I told the Principal that I was. At this he laughed and said, "You silly boy, you are rude!". That was the expression of his affection. I explained to him respectfully that I was young and vulnerable, was married and had a child too. I did not want to wreck my family. Not exactly rudeness, but indifference and aloofness were my protective armor. The Principal was very understanding; he sent for the girls. They entered, led by one who, I know, had taken a fancy for me and had turned bitter for lack of response. Color left her face as she saw me and replied in a broken voice that they did not know when I had begun my class.

In those "not-so-civilized" days, the girls had a separate common room. When the teacher went to the class they followed him. I explained to the Principal that I waited for a minute in front of their room but they were not there; and all that followed. The girls told the Principal that the Biology Professor had left the class fifteen minutes late. The Principal asked them to be on time and dismissed them. When they had left, he asked me to call them when I went to the class. Very humbly, I refused to do that and told him that if the next time they made a different type of complaint I should not be able

to show him my face. He was pleased and in his characteristic affectionate manner asked me to get out.

Outside the staff-room there was a big open space where teachers used to sit in off-time. Students met them there to solve their difficulties. One day, Professor Shri Ram of Mathematics, a highly respected gentleman and one who treated me like his son, was explaining to two or three students some problem of Trigonometry and was using frequently the terms, Sin, Cos etc. In a naughty mood, I whispered into his ear, "Lalaji, why are you so fond of your name!" He was nicknamed Professor Theta Ram. On an impulse, he gave me a slap, but said immediately, "Rishi, I am sorry." "Why", I asked. "I have felt as if my father were not dead. The other cheek begs for a similar favor." A happy memory!

The Principal had instituted a College Parliament to encourage students to learn the art of public speaking and parliamentary etiquette. Students of the College were divided into two groups. There were those with leftist sympathies and those others a little right of the center. I was regarded the mentor of this latter group. The lady P.M. belonged to the former group. One day, she moved a resolution that the bust of Tagore be installed in the triangular park in front of the Principal's office. On the success or failure of this resolution depended the fate of her ministry. It was a clever move to win the vote of confidence. Who would oppose such a popular resolution! An old friend of mine, belonging to the Opposition, came to me and asked me to oppose it. I was shocked and asked him what he was going to ask me to do. But he insisted and I had to submit. When I stood up to speak, I asked the mover of the resolution to name two or three persons who would defend the honor of the installed bust against the feared attempt of the police to desecrate it in those troubled days. The house saw my point and rejected the popular resolution.

Another similar memory. The Hindu College Parliament in those days had become a prestigious and popular institution of the city. Its sessions were held in the evenings and the amphitheater used to be packed to capacity. Quite a large number stood on the fringes. The Second World War was on.

A resolution was moved from the government benches with some such words: "The peace of the world would be restored if the widow of Mussolini told the widow of Tojo, (Prime Minister of Japan), at her husband's funeral, that Hitler was dead." It meant, in other words, dictatorship and fascism would be liquidated. I was sitting in an upper tier with Dr. Indra Sen who later joined the Aurobindo Ashram. Bharat, the secretary of the Parliament, came to me and asked me to speak on the resolution. I was taken by surprise. He was my student in the intermediate class and much as I pleaded with him to excuse me, he insisted, and I had to yield. I stood up to speak. I don't know what possessed me that day. The House, which was generally noisy, listened to me in hushed silence. The Speaker also turned his chair to face me. I spoke for an hour or so. My argument was that both dictatorship and fascism were the historical product of imperialism and colonialism. I delved into history and concluded: "The peace of the world would be restored if the widow of Churchill told the widow of (I forget the name of the French imperialist leader at the time), that India was free and Pandit Nehru had been elected her first Prime Minister." The whole amphitheater resounded with prolonged cheers. This speech created quite a sensation in the College. I was stormed with congratulations from students and colleagues.

Professor Ganpat Rai, Head of the Department of History, a father-figure and a highly respected gentleman, had taken charge of sports. He wanted to make changes in the conduct of certain games. I was asked to take the coveted charge of cricket. This charge resulted in my glory as well as my misfortune. I had sanctioned a tour of the team which cost the College 300 rupees. The Principal would not pass the bill and I would not say 'sorry' because I had done no wrong, nor exceeded my authority. Things came to such a pass that I went to the Principal with my letter of resignation as I felt I could not continue in the service of the College having offended the man who was my bread-giver and whom I almost worshipped. Thinking I was resigning my charge of cricket, the Principal asked me to rather resign from the College. When I told him that it was my resignation from the College, he whistled in

disgust, tore off my letter and asked me to 'get out'. Greatness indeed!

Hundreds of memories come crowding upon me. For lack of space, I'll conclude with one to my abiding shame and mortification. The College Council in Dr. Thadani's time was not an elected body. The whole staff comprised it. The group of teachers, opposed to Dr. Thadani from the days of his earlier stint as Principal of Hindu College, invited a very senior but volatile colleague to insult the Principal in a meeting of the Council. Later, the staff moved a resolution of no-confidence in him by majority vote. The Governing Body sent a very senior member to meet the staff and assess the situation. Bhojwani presented the Principal's case and called upon me to corroborate. I intended to say that if the Principal was to be insulted in his own office, as Dr. Thadani had been, the College cannot run. But I was so intimidated by that group that I simply said, "I have nothing to say."

I, who had prided myself so far in life for fearlessness and courage to speak out the truth with utter disregard for consequences or on my sense of gratitude to persons like Dr. Thadani who had done so much good to me, turned out to be such a weak - kneed man, such an ungrateful wretch! For me, it was a moral suicide, and I have suffered since from secret pricks of conscience. After this, I never felt at ease in the College and once again went to the Principal with a letter of resignation, fully confident that it should be accepted. The Principal felt hurt and asked me whether I remembered what he had done to a similar letter earlier. When I told him that he had torn it, he said, "I tear it again, but next time if you come with one I should have no option but to send it to the GB." This show of greatness of mind and large heartedness was enough to make me ashamed of myself. What, however, followed was nobler still. He said, "Rishi Ram, have I done you any wrong? If so, I apologize." This expression of his greatness smashed me completely. I could not stand it. Tears welled up in my eyes and I felt like falling at his feet and apologising. But the thought that if some colleague dropped in, he would broadcast to the whole College that the Principal was firing me and I was begging for forgiveness, stalled me

and I came out of his office, completely humiliated. I shall never forgive myself. This sad memory shall haunt me till my last day.

Some of this debt, however, I paid him when I defended him boldly in a meeting of the All India Conference of University Teachers held in the University Hall. A very senior professor of the university, later its V.C., made some damaging remarks against his absence. I defended him against all the allegations made and almost rebuked the professor for attacking a highly respected gentleman in his absence. My short speech created a furore, the meeting broke up and I faced angry and threatening looks from many in the crowd. But I was happy.

During my long tenure in the College, I came into contact with a number of bright young men and women who are doing very well in life, and who in their college days had made a rich contribution to the College life. The last, but no way the least of them, is the present Principal of the College, Dr. Mrs. Kavita Sharma. I am proud to say that I got from my students, both at College and in the University, all that a teacher could have asked for. I wish I could say the same about most of my colleagues, especially those in the Department of English.

Prem Chand*

October, 1936

I do not have many years to look forward to, but I do have a great many years to look back upon. Memory plays strange tricks upon us. Yet some things live vividly - what was petty should be allowed to fade away: the rest shines like stars in the night. I had been a Stephanian for six years - During the last year I developed a serious eye trouble, forcing me to give up my studies. After several years, spent in invaluable idleness..... I returned to complete my unfinished M.A. But, for certain reasons the return was not to my old college - I became a Hinduite - Next Three Months

I noticed two big differences in the atmosphere of the College (i) In St. Stephen's College, the concept of "freedom from national bondage" had only a cognitive meaning for us: there was neither passion in it nor action - For one thing most of us belonged to that section of society which was a part of the ruling system of the country - For another, the 'negative' force of nationalism was missing in us - How could it have been otherwise, when we came into contact with some very fine Englishmen, full of Christian love and service, who were on the teaching staff of the college - In Hindu College, the picture was entirely different - Nearly everyone was a nationalist, a fierce nationalist, with love in his heart for the great nationalist leaders, and hatred in his heart for Englishmen and British imperialism - Politics was a passion with them. (ii) In St. Stephen's, the most admired students were those who were good both in studies and in sports - To be admired, you had to achieve this rare combination - Strange though it may sound, the combination in my days was not rare either

**Student in Hindu College, 1936-37, teacher in the Department of Philosophy, Hindu College, 1937-79. Speaker of the College Parliament for several decades.*

This article is reprinted from an old issue of the College Magazine.

- In Hindu, the most admired students belonged to an entirely different category: these were the persons who were known as good public speakers - There were several 'stars', but the most shining of them all was Kanwar Lal Sharma, who was the 'idol' of the college-

January 1937

Having belonged to the category of 'admired' students as a Stephanian, it was painful to be out of this circle as a Hinduite - As a Stephanian, I had done no public speaking - Something had to be done about this 'shortcoming' - very soon, an opportunity came my way - To cut a long story short, I participated in the All-India Debate organized by Hindu College - The motion for debate was; "This House Welcomes another Great War" - I must have lost my nervousness on the playing - fields of St. Stephen's College - When my turn came, there was no nervous tension: Most of the speech was heard in silence. Towards the end, I said these words: "Mr. President, it is said that woman is gifted with a special psychical mechanism which makes her forget the pains of child birth" - There was a hush, the audience wondering what the hell was I talking about - Then came these words; 'our friends, on the other side of the House, seem to be gifted with a similar psychical mechanism which makes them forget the horrors of modern warfare - if mankind is fated to have another war, it will have to face it, but let there be no talk of welcoming it" - There was applause; fortune not only smiled, but laughed: my 'maiden' speech had won the First Prize -

A few days after this, there was an Extra-ordinary Session of the College Parliament - The motion for debate was: "This House prefers Dominion Status to Independence" - The motion was moved by M.J., a British M.P., and seconded by Sir G.J., a leader of the Liberal Party of India: it was opposed by Principal Thadani, and Principal Shahani of Law Faculty - The other participants were two students of Hindu College, I being one of them - As I rose to speak for the motion, there were interruptions: the House was plainly hostile - I cut short my speech and said; 'Sir, I know that the House is against us - But that does not matter, when the arguments are with us.

This House is against us, because not only men, but words also, are known by the company that they keep - The words 'Dominion Status' have kept very bad company, the company of a British Political Party and the Indian Liberal Party, both of which smell badly in India' - The House gave me an ovation - I am recalling these two speeches, dear reader, not to praise myself, nor to record some historical facts, but to show how destiny shapes our lives. Years later, Principal Thadani told me that it was these two speeches of mine which made him decide that if I did reasonably well in my M.A. examination, he would like to have me on the teaching staff of the College—

October 1937 - December 1939

There is a vacancy in the Philosophy department - There is an interview: I am a candidate with a 1st Class Ist from Delhi University: there are two Ph.D.'s from foreign universities, and one with a degree from Cambridge University: the rest have lower paper qualifications - Principal Thadani sees to it that I am selected for the job - 'The Moving Finger Writes' —

Whatever achievement I have to my credit in the next two years are the gifts of the College Parliament.....I remember winning two important motions, which were initially disliked by the House - One was "If man is to live, God must go" - This was won by employing this argument: 'when we say God must go, what we mean is that exploitation in the name of God must go' - The other resolution was: "The Congress leadership has failed and must go" - This was also won by employing a similar trick: 'When we say that the Congress leadership must go, we do not mean that Gandhi must go, or Nehru must go, or Patel must go — What we mean is that the Liberal Policies that they have been following recently must go - Today. The Liberal Party Says: We are not popular with the people, but our policies are popular with the Congress party - let the Liberals not have that satisfaction'.

January 1940

The College Parliament was started by Principal Thadani in 1935 - Dr. Saksena was the Speaker - in 1937, when he went

abroad, Dr. Indra Sen became the Speaker. In 1938, Dr. Bool Chand returned from abroad and took up the Speakership. In January 1940, he left us to join Hindu University, Benaras. The College is full of 'luminaries', so far as the college staff is concerned. There is Dr. B.R. Seth: There is Dr. B.N. Ganguli: There is Dr. Umrao Bahadur: There is Mr. S.L. Poplai. The question is: who is going to be the next Speaker. The Constitution allowed the Principal to nominate some teacher for this 'prestigious' post. Principal Thadani decides to leave it to the Staff Council, to propose namesOnly one name is proposed and seconded and supported.

What the College Parliament has meant to me, I have no words to describe. What I have meant to the College Parliament, it is not for me to say. Parliament means government by discussion. This presupposes freedom of speech and also a spirit of toleration and adjustment. The Hon'ble Members have to accept certain disciplines. Mr. Speaker functions as the regulator of the proceedings of the House. The authority of the Speaker represents the dignity of the House. And so, 'When the Chair Stands, there shall be perfect silence in the House'. 'The Chair' 'Standing.....when these words were first used by me, they caused vast amusement and then respectful silence.

Times have changed, and the heart has gone out of the College Parliament. It is not longer a symbol of glamour, a magnet of attraction.....I have seen its decline in my own times and have felt sad of heart.

"The Speaker does not speak." Therefore, I started training some of the gifted boys and girls of the college in the art of Public Speaking. As I played Professor Higgins in training some members of the fair sex, it was strongly rumoured that I was partial to the young girls of the College. It is amazing the way people go about saying things against one that are entirely true, of course. I was partial to the fair sex: one has no right to be a confirmed bachelor unless one is partial to young girls. But take my word for it, all the attachments thus formed were purely platonic.

1958

Life is so full of surprises. I have been offered the Principalship of the College: I have been asked to think it over for forty-eight hours. That was not necessary: one hour was more than enough: I was not cut out for a job of this type.

1963-1964

This time the pressure is great.....it is a long story. After talking to almost all the senior members of the teaching staff, I recommended the name of Dr.B.M. Bhatia to the authorities.

1964-1976

The rest is recent history. The College has certainly progressed during this period. Dr. B.M. Bhatia is not a modest man: he has much to be immodest about - One would still like to say him: "Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth: a stranger, and not thine own lips".

I retire in April 1976, after completing the age of 65. But the innings is still not ended: the University Grants Commission gives me an award, till the age of 68, under the scheme, 'utilization of the services of outstanding retired teachers'.

17th April, 1979

Mr. Prime Minister, please raise the curtain again: don't you hear the applause: they are bidding me farewell.

Sir, you must be dreaming. It is true that we had called a meeting to bid you farewell. But very few turned up, and so we cancelled the meeting.

In summer we pine for winter: in winter, we pine for summer. The seasons pay no heed to us. To everything there is a season. There was the time to speak. Now, there is the time to keep silence. Silence is better than unmeaning words in the book of life: every page has two sides, the one written by man, the other written by Fate.

Daya Krishna*

1938 to 1945 — those were the years when I was a student in Hindu College and they are the years of my "living memory" in which alone the past lives in the present. As one turns the pages backwards, one feels the fragrances slowly stealing over one's being, fresh from the flowers that were pressed and preserved in one's youthful past. And, like Proust, one is immersed in memories, long forgotten and still a part of one's innermost self.

Yes, those were the years of the Second World War, the Quit India Movement, the Subhash Bose episode and amidst it all, the quiet environs of the old Kashmere Gate where the two colleges, Hindu and St. Stephen's, faced each other like friendly rivals, with the church looking benignly over them, and the Nicholson Park and the Qudsia gardens just behind the old gate. The Yamuna river was not far off and the playing fields of the College along the Bela road and the bank of the Boat Club were situated near the river bank for those who loved to row and go across to the other side to steal melons that were grown in the sand near the river.

The setting is necessary to understand the student world of those days when the life of learning was centered in the College and when everyone assumed that teaching makes man think and students learn. How else can one ever understand that with only three teachers in Philosophy in the College we learnt what students today do not even learn with dozen of professors around them in each department of the University. To be taught by persons like Dr. Indra Sen, Dr. S. K. Saxena and Prof. Prem Chand was the privilege of a lifetime or was a living experience and we looked forward to their classes, wondering what new portions would unfold that day. We talked about the things we learned to other students and some of them started attending our classes regularly, even though they were formerly enrolled in other subjects.

*Student in Hindu College, 1938-45

They were the teachers with whom we had the longest and the most intimate contact as they taught Philosophy. But there were others who taught us at the Intermediate level and the two years of our B. A. and the two years of our M.A. course. Many did not teach us but we knew them well and they knew us too. Amongst them, Dr. B. N. Ganguli in Economics, Dr. Hari Dutta Sharma in Sanskrit, Dr. S. L. Popli in History, Dr. B. R. Seth in Mathematics and Dr. N. V. Thadani in English, remain deep in our memory. The latter was also the Principal of the College who governed it with a strict kindliness that ensured both freedom and discipline on the campus and the playfield.

To be in College in those days was to be in the midst of activity all the year round. There was the Parliament, the Literary Union, the Departmental Association and the College magazine, the quarterly examination, the annual All-India debates, the Kavi Sammelans, the Mushairas, the work from the national leaders, the festivities, the Fancy Dress show and the Annual Cricket Final between the old rivals, Hindu College and St. Stephen's. There was a constant on-going dialogue between some of the brightest students from different disciplines and they had the active support and encouragement from the faculty in all subjects. To name but a few, we had Girilal Jain and Sita Ram Goel from History; Raj Krishna and Ram Swarup from Economics; J. N. Kapoor from Mathematics; Madan Mohan Mathur, J. P. Guha and K. K. Kaul from English; and Vivek Dutta in Philosophy. Besides this, there was L. C. Jain, Som Benegal, Brij Mohan Toofan and amongst the younger contemporaries, Kapila Mullick, now Kapila Vatsyayan.

Was it all too serious? No fun, no pranks? Of course there were in plenty. Who can imagine someone coming dressed as a Naga Sadhu in a Fancy Dress show? Yet, Brij Mohan Toofan did and when a scandalized and enraged Principal asked him to get out, he staunchly refused, saying, "Sir, I represent one of the oldest and the noblest sects of Sadhus in India". Toofan is no more, but the memory of his innumerable pranks, imaginatively conceived and boldly executed even now regale his friends when they talk about him. Or in a different vein,

who would imagine Kapila in those days going to bat as a young college girl in a friendly match with boys?

Enough of memories! But how can one allow the gates of memory to close without recalling the ever helpful Banwari who watched over each student's cycle so carefully or the eternally pan-chewing Har Govind, the book lifter in the Library, or Mithan Halwai outside the gate, the rendering of Hitler's speeches by Prof. Prem Chand who wrote the main events of those days in the pages of the College Magazine under the title "Time Marches On" or the innumerable walks along the Yamuna with friends and the interminable discussions that were held there.

Three cheers for those days and I hope every student of the College or University today will have a similar, rewarding experience.

Preet Chablani*

My childhood memories of Hindu College belong to the 20's when we lived behind Hindu College. The bungalow was across the street at the back of the students' hostel, which was a part of the college campus. The proper entry to the college was from the main road with the elite Kashmere Gate shopping area on one side and on the other side, what I remember most was Mithan Halwai's shop where we got hot 'jalebis' in the morning. As far as I can recollect jalebis with milk was considered a breakfast food and not like now when fresh jalebis are available only in the evening.

The main entrance to the college had a wide gate with beautiful bougainvilleas on the two posts and led directly across to the Principal's office with an open door in front and a chaprasi in attendance. The Principal could from this vantage-point observe what happened outside. Many knew of this hazard and were careful- their bearing, conduct and manners could be under scrutiny and they were expected to behave like gentleman at all times!

Passing through this area today, I wonder if one recollects it in its earlier glory of pre-New Delhi construction when it was considered a posh area. The fashionable elite of Delhi kept it busy with shopping through the glass windows, which were in no way comparable to the wide see-through screens of today.

To facilitate easy communication a back door entry to the college through the hostel was made available for the Principal. This was also used by the few girl students who spent their free periods with my mother in our house. One of these girls, Ms Kala Gupta was later Principal of the Indraprastha Girls College.

**Student in Hindu College, 1938-41, daughter of former Principal, Late Shri N.V. Thadani.*

But it was in the late thirties and early forties that as a student of BA Hons. and MA I got in touch with the college and felt the impact of the changing times – the government policies and the growing independence movement as reflected in the education system. The Principal, my father, was a staunch nationalist, in intimate touch with the Congress. The national independence movement had become a part of our lives. While the authorities kept a close watch on its growing tentacles, they wanted to closely monitor the educational system and keep it under control. The Principal realized that unless the meaning of Education and Independence were clearly understood and the two kept apart, the authorities would throttle their growth. This would stunt the national interest. There had been various instances where an attempt by the students to raise the national flag had led to a forcible hoisting of Union Jack. It was only when this aspect of the movement was explained to the students and understood by them that, without any direct confrontation with the authorities, the College was able to conduct its free and liberal policies.

Hindu College allowed and encouraged debates and lectures by national leaders and students on current subjects. In fact, to encourage the students to develop and strengthen their views, scholars and national leaders were invited to participate and address the students. This development required suitable premises and these were provided by building the college amphitheater where a large audience could be accommodated. This exposure of the students to the outside world in the educational environment was considered a novel feature.

I remember the excitement which we all felt when leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Bulabhai Desai, Asaf Ali, Acharya Kriplani and others came to participate in our deliberations. An unforgettable event was an address to the students by Shri Rabindranath Tagore - while seated on the dais he impressed us with his stately presence, but after a few introductory remarks when he started reciting his poems in a commanding voice we were overawed. He became a different man, alive with the fire of his inward joy. He was in tune with the images he had created and lifted us all into the world of his imagination.

In the thirties Delhi roads were occupied mostly by cyclists and tongas and riding a bicycle at night without a light was a punishable offence. Detected only in the dark, it would often lead to the offender being kept overnight in police custody. Hindu College made an arrangement with the authorities that instead of taking students into custody the students would be referred to the College and the Principal would take necessary action. This saved the students from unnecessary harassment. No policemen could enter the College premises without the prior knowledge / permission of the Principal. In contrast, in the world of today there are instances where the College authorities themselves require police protection.

There were not many girl students in Hindu College nor were they encouraged to come in, and were admitted only in faculties not available elsewhere. The Indraprastha Girls College was not equipped for science, honours and post graduate classes. The girls in Hindu College were therefore, limited to only a small group in these classes. The seating arrangement for girls was reserved in the front benches of the classrooms and they were expected to troop in through the front door when the bell rang. The library was almost out of bounds for the girls. The teachers, parents / guardians were expected to guide them in their reading habits and obtain the necessary books and material. Segregation of boys and girls was strictly observed. Even a small incident of a boy brushing against a girl while coming out of the laboratory in haste would cause his expulsion for a week or two for misconduct.

And finally one memory, which I recall with interest, shows how life patterns have changed over the times. An outstation girl student seeking admission in the MA faculty was told by the Principal that she would not be admitted if she came to the college riding a bicycle from the new YWCA in New Delhi. To gain admission, her sole purpose for coming to Delhi, she shifted to the old, dilapidated YWCA premises in Kashmere Gate. This would enable her to walk 'decently' to the college. The Principal, a great enthusiast and promoter of women's education would not encourage a social change which went against the established patterns of conduct. With the passage of time much has changed and a peep into the past can be a very sobering experience.

Sarup Singh*

In conversation with

Dr. Suroopa Mukherjee, Dr. Tapan Basu and Mr. Sunil Dua.

I was in Hindu College from 1940 to 1953. That was a glorious period for the College. Mr. Thadani was the Principal at that time. He left in 1952, I think, and was succeeded by another distinguished person, whose distinction some fellows recognized while some others did not - Mr. Bhattacharji. He was from Oxford University. He was also the Head of the Department of English in the University of Delhi. In those days, the Headship of the University departments went to the three colleges - St. Stephen's, Hindu and Ramjas. These three colleges had recognized Readers. The colleges had Lecturers, but, in those days, the University had the option to recognize you as a Reader. Incidentally, I was the last man in the University of Delhi to be recognized as a Reader. And, in that capacity, I also became the Head of the University Department of English for some time.

Once, while Thadani Sa'ab was the Principal, there was a function in College. One student, Shiela Dhar, came on to the stage to perform. And one boy, who was the goonda of Kashmere Gate, suddenly appeared from nowhere and said something very nasty. With tears in her eyes, Shiela left the stage. I was astounded. I stood up and said, "What is happening to this college? About a thousand people are sitting here and any body can come and create mischief? Catch hold of him". And I asked Shiela to come back to the stage and the programme continued. But next day, Principal Thadani called me because I had said something stupid like 'This college is going to the dogs'. You must remember that in the heat of the moment, I couldn't choose my words. Nonetheless, I apologized. All this shows that there were some of us,

**Teacher in the Department of English, Hindu College, 1940-53.*

especially the younger people, who were devoted to the College, who would fight for the College and some of the students would, of course, support us. But there were others who would be busy pulling the leg of the Principal or somebody else.

Another incident that I remember occurred when I was the Principal of Kirori Mal College. The Hindu College Hostel stewards went on strike and refused to cook. So, at night I went to the hostel, partly because I was devoted to Mr. Bhattacharji and also because I loved the College and I couldn't see anything going wrong there. I called some of the servants and said "Look here, something may have happened, but for that why do you stop work. Where shall the students go?" The stewards said, "But Sir, they misbehaved with us". "All right," I said, "for that I apologize. What more do you want? But please don't bring disgrace to the College." And would you believe it, they all agreed. Some teachers, who didn't like me, came to know that I had intervened in this affair and they made an issue of it. Why should outsiders come and interfere in our affairs? So, I came to Hindu College, during the day, and I told the teachers, "I am not an outsider. I don't regard myself as an outsider. And if Hindu College burns tomorrow, for whatever reasons, I will come and extinguish the fire. My first loyalty is to Hindu College whether you like it or not. I have not taken anything from you and if I want to help the college, what objection can you have?" To one of the teachers who was shouting, I said, "Mr. So and so, you have never taken a class in your life. What right have you to speak? Its men like you who are ruining the college."

I will tell you how unfortunate Hindu College has been. A stage came when I came to Hindu College as the Chairman of a Committee appointed by the UGC. It had some money, for the sciences, which it was willing to spend on a few colleges. At that time Mr. Bhatia was the Principal of Hindu College. He was not very popular or something of that sort. We went to the staff room and I said, "What can we do to improve this college? Tell us." One of the teachers stood up and said, "There is only one thing that will improve this college. Dismiss this man." I said, "Thank you. I apologize for wasting

your time. You are lowering the reputation of this college. This college will be destroyed by teachers, not by students."

In Mr. Thadani's time, however, it would be impossible for teachers to cut classes. He was an institution. He was a Cambridge man, very noble. In Mr. Bhattacharya's time, it was the same. He was a senior man and a good man. He would not quarrel with anybody but he had a strong moral presence.

We had a freedom in our time, which is not possible today. Once, I remember a student came to meet me. He is a very well-known person today; if I mention his name, you will be surprised. Anyway, he came to me one evening and said "Sir, I will commit suicide." I asked him "Why?" "Sir, because I am in love with so-and-so," he replied. I told him about a line from Shakespeare, 'Men have died for all kinds of reasons, but not for love.' And I asked him "Why have you come to me? Has she refused to meet you?" He said, "Sir, I do not have the courage." So I approached the girl and told her. "Look, this is what that man said, I think that he is madly in love with you. At least talk to him. Bring him to his senses. If you dislike him, tell him so. If you don't dislike him, why then go ahead." Now they are married.

Another thing I like about those days is that the students were very patriotic. They were always mobilized. The distinction between St. Stephen's and Hindu College lies in this. Mr. Thadani had always taken a nationalist stand. And a funny thing that happened was that the British government decided to award a distinction to the two college Principals. St. Stephen's and Hindu. They offered a title - Rai Bahadur - to both the Principals - Mr. Thadani and Mr. Mukarji. Mr. Mukarji duly accepted it and till he lived he was always called Rai Bahadur. Mr. Thadani, however, refused to accept the title. It needed great courage. The result was that he was highly respected.

1942 came, and Hindu College was in rebellion. About a dozen students got involved in the movement indirectly, I think. I don't think they went to jail. They used to put posters and other minor activities. When Gandhiji got arrested, some teachers also marched upto Kashmere Gate. At that period, Mrs. Asaf Ali came to Delhi trying to mobilize people. There

was a senior man in Hindu College – a Ph.D. from London, a distinguished teacher. He had a large house in civil lines. It was a house where 40 to 50 people could come and gather. Some students decided to meet at his house, where Mrs. Asaf Ali could come and talk. Two teachers (myself included) also decided to attend. It was not easy, to offer your house like this, because you could be arrested. We all went there but the house was locked. Something or the other happened and they lost their nerve. The students told me that the meeting had been shifted. What they did not disclose was that it had been shifted to the house where I resided. When I reached my house, I found that my wife had spread some dais and there was Mrs. Asaf Ali. They hadn't even asked me!

Anyway, she was in a hurry. She left shortly after I arrived. One had to be on the move constantly, to escape detection. Immediately afterwards, the police arrived. They asked me what the gathering was in aid of. I said that they were my students. They did not harass anyone and left. The Sub-inspector of Subzi Mandi came to meet me in the evening. All the policemen were not against us. He said "It is a most foolish thing that you have done. Just see how unsafe your house is. It can be surrounded immediately by us. I deliberately delayed our arrival; otherwise you and your students would have been arrested. For god's sake abstain from such activities." There were some people of that kind. And Sir Maurice was glorious! The report was given to him that I had done something. He called me and talked about Shakespeare and about this and about that for about half an hour. When I was leaving, he said, "I have learnt about your extra-curricular activities. But I advise you, please be careful."

There was a tradition, in some departments, to take classes even on Sundays from the months of January to March, about two months before the examinations. And we were doing it regularly. These days, even on normal days, classes are not being held.

What could one do? Deterioration had started in the University. It is there now. I was foolish that I could take a fight. The best time in Hindu College was till the 70s. Then it started declining. In a sense it is not declining because the younger staff are good. And their quality is good. Now, I am

told, in the English, History and Economics departments there are good teachers. But the students are not interested. They don't attend classes. And one doesn't know what to do about it. Our college spirit disappears immediately. Two of my grand children, who studied in St. Stephen's College, told me that they used to get notes from outside. They used to pay heavily to some tutor because they could afford it. I said to my daughter, "It is your children's education. How can you?" She said, "Because we are rich." This is a new thing that is happening. In our time, there was no question of any tuition. Teachers used to work. Students used to work. Teachers used to have personal contact with our students. There was a spirit of co-operation. We used to visit the students in the hostel to find out what they are doing, especially our M.A. students. And we would discuss their problems. Now there is no such contact or only a marginal contact. I do not know what can be done.

L. C. Jain*

I was a student of Hindu College between 1940-1947, with a little break in between when I left the college for little over a year during the Quit India Movement.

It was a many-splendoured place. Some dimensions strike me: (1) Active involvement in politics of the day; (2) Many activities, especially inter-college debates, where students from different constituents of the university interacted with each other. Thus, though I was a student of the Hindu College, I always felt I was part of the larger community, the Delhi University; (3) But there was one dimension in which there was stark isolation from the life of the university. The women students were confined to the Indraprastha College, as St. Stephen's nor other colleges had any women. Only the Hindu College had a limited number of women students but they were strictly held, as it were, behind a purdah. (4) On the sports field, there was always passionate competition between different colleges and the participation was exceedingly high - be it cricket, hockey or football. (5) I have a clear recollection that Hindu was ahead of other colleges in the university both in academic achievements and political activism.

Hindu had the unique institution of a College Parliament, which was an excellent forum for rousing interest in public affairs in the general body of the students as well as giving what could be called training to some of the students elected as the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition. The College Parliament would frequently invite leaders who were Members of the Central Assembly as it was called, personalities like Sathyamurthy, C. Rajagopalachari, and N.G. Ranga.

The relatively quiet political activism burst into an explosion from the day the Quit India Movement was launched. Interestingly, many of those who were active participants in the College Parliament, persons like Giri Lal Jain (later editor,

**Student in Hindu College, 1940-1947.*

Times of India) who was one time Prime Minister of College, came to the fore to rally the students and faculty members. During the Quit India days, a number of them were jailed, a number of them went underground and still others continued to distribute the leaflets and reading material circulated by the underground activists of the Quit India Movement. The students had built up an alert and effective communication system across colleges in the Delhi University and I had some hand in building up this communication network which could within a space of few hours organise strikes and protest rallies with lightening speed. A number of students of chemistry in the Hindu College also formed a bomb squad for disrupting the functioning of various public places as planned by the underground. Alas, one such bomb exploded in one of the classrooms of the Hindu College. But fortunately it happened a few minutes after the class had adjourned. It was discovered that one of the students in that class was carrying the bomb which he was to place at some assigned public crossing. He felt he could attend the lecture of the day and then go and perform his explosive task later. While leaving the class, he forgot the bag with the bomb. The life in the college was also tense because a number of military officers used to come and prompt the students to enroll in the British Indian Army. They were always confronted with some harassment. Often, the tyres of their vehicles were deflated or some sand put into the petrol tank.

The most celebrated event used to be the inter-university debates which the Hindu College proudly organised each year. This used to draw faculty and students from across the country, with the amphitheatre of Hindu College overflowing. One person who always enlivened the judges bench was A.S. Bokhari (Director General of the All India Radio); he invariably announced the decision of the judges and then treated us all to superb oration. The students and the faculty used to be as hungry for his oration as for the debate.

There was a radical change in the university environment when the INA trials began. Students of St. Stephen's College which used to largely keep aloof from political events, suddenly joined hands with groups from Hindu and other

colleges to organise a mass protest rally outside the Red Fort which was broken up by heavy tear gas charge by the police. The explanation was that there were several families of the St. Stephen's College students who were officers in the British Indian Army and who had joined the Indian National Army or the Azad Hind Fauz. That forged ties between St. Stephen's and other colleges. Later, as negotiations for transfer of power picked up steam, this participation became more vigorous and widespread. I remember a students' convention which was very largely attended in the Gandhi Ground behind the Central Bank Building in Chandni Chowk. In fact there was constant threat of the pandal being pulled apart by the milling crowds. In the middle of it, I came across the most unexpected sight - Principal N.V. Thadani of Hindu College who was a great scholar and who strictly stayed away from political activism - was right there in the middle of the students' crowd which was trying to pull down the pandal. Principal Thadani was persuading them with folded hands to allow the proceedings to continue peacefully! There were, of course, other members of the Hindu College teaching community who were also there - Prof. B.N. Ganguli, S.L. Poplai - who were throughout and very openly and actively associated with the political events and turmoil during the Quit India Movement. Then on 15th August there was a flag hoisting at the university grounds by Prof. V.K.R.V. Rao with a stirring and inspiring call to build a new India.

By this time, the isolation of the women students in the Indraprastha College also burst at the seams though it had not quite gone. Even in Hindu College, the strict disciplinarian Principal Thadani - who enforced the rule that boys could not talk to girls and that after the class, the girls had to stay in the women's common room and remain confined behind a chik - began to melt. The girl students began to contest public elections in the college - be it for Parliament, for the Literary Union or the Dramatics Society. Sheila (Bahadur) Dhar was prominent at the Boat Club and Kapila (Malik) Vatsyayan at all literary events. Som Benegal made Hindu College English Dramatics Society famous with his gifted direction.

Bicycles were the principal means of transport other than the bus. There used to be hardly half a dozen cars, mostly

belonging to the Principal and the faculty members, and a couple of them to the students. There were thus hundreds of bicycles parked at the entrance of the college and the most enduring soul in the college campus was Banwari who was the guardian of the cycles. He would take over the bicycle from the owner at the entrance as one was always in a hurry to reach the classroom. He would stack it. But when one wanted to claim one's bicycle, Banwari always knew which bicycle belonged to whom and where exactly it was parked. The owners could go wrong but not him. He was a legend.

Kapila Vatsyayan*

From the cloistered life of Indraprastha School in Jama Masjid to the open gates of Hindu College in the fateful years of 1942 was indeed a big change. I had travelled home to school and back behind netted buses, head covered with a chuni. Inside the small gate was an open courtyard of frolic and freedom nurtured by the spirit of theosophy, Annie Besant and her followers. Besides the school curricula, taught by a bunch of dedicated teachers and the headmistress Miss Naidu, there were the echoes of the freedom struggle. One day, while preparing as young girl-guides to go to the Vice-regal Lodge, a group of us shouted "Up, up, National Flag and down, down, Union Jack". We were supposed to say the opposite or at least salute the Union Jack. Aruna Asaf Ali in the background, Sarla Gupta (now Sarla Sharma) in the foreground had inspired the sudden revolt. Punishment was inevitable. We were rusticated but on hind sight only as a formality. We could attend school but not attend classes. Unless we attained the first five positions, the school decided to fail us. We passed with flying colours. I received fourteen prizes that year.

This was a year preceding the entry into Hindu College. I entered the college in the summer of 1942. From the journeys in the school bus to cycling from Connaught Place to Kashmere Gate or Bus No. 1 or 2 was a change. The transition was smooth but not without its drama. There were boys everywhere. The proportion of girls to boys was infinitesimal. About twenty girls to a thousand boys. We were acutely aware of watching eyes as we entered the gate. The journey from the gate to the 'chicked screen' of the Ladies Room was a feat of resolute courage. Not infrequently there would be some remarks complimentary or otherwise. There was a group of boys at the entrance, they were regulars. Some amongst them entered politics.

**Student in Hindu College, 1942-45.*

But once the entry was over, there was the excitement about courses and classes. The teachers gave special attention to the few girls who sat together huddled up on a single bench, be it the Physics or Chemistry classes or the large English or History classes of the first years. While social interaction was minimal there was freedom to ask questions in class. Often we would argue as vehemently as the boys would. Occasionally if a boy student dared to make an unacceptable remark he would be slapped. The other boys would stand up for the girls and take him to task, physically or otherwise. Justice was immediate and instant and there were no long drawn petitions and inquires. The canteen and the playground were the forums for restoring balances and dinning sense into those who had deviated from norms. Thus, we knew that if there were naughty or uncouth boys, there were an equal or more number of good ones. We became pals with no gender consciousness. Many are still friends (yaars) of those days.

Principal N. V. Thadani was a strong austere man of imposing personality and firm principles. He was a great teacher of English, who would encourage us to close our eyes and meditate on the verses of Keats, Shelley and Donne. We understood little of the Romantic Movement or the Metaphysicals but we happily went into a reverie with him. Outside he was a strict disciplinarian. He tolerated no loitering around, no conclaves of girls and boys together on the steps of the famous parliament. Once there was an altercation. I was heatedly debating something with a group of boys. There was to be a parliament session. Principal Thadani walked up majestically and said, "Very interested in talking to boys, aren't you?" Furious and red in the face I shot back, "Of course, that is why I have joined Hindu College".

But the reaction was instantaneous and spontaneous. A strike was organised to protest against the Principal's remarks. The teachers were roped in. The college came to a halt. No less than the great philosopher Dr. S. K. Saksena walked up to the Principal to convince him that, with the home background of some of the girls, they could no longer be confined to the ladies room beyond class hours and that they should be allowed to converse with boys on the campus. Also that the Principal should take some of the students, particularly the

girls, into confidence for governing the college. He listened patiently and took note. Since then we were friends forever. At one level a battle of sorts had been won. We did not even realise that we were bringing up gender issues, we were only being natural. The incident remains in my mind as one of great learning.

The atmosphere was charged with Gandhiji's speeches. On 9th August, we heard the clarion call of Quit India and "Do or Die". Spontaneously we marched from Kashmere Gate to St Stephen's College to have it closed. A procession was formed. Lakshmi Jain was on the forefront, accompanied by Kusum (now Mrs. Keyt) and Shakti Dutta. The vanguard got arrested while those in the rear guard like me dispersed and others absconded. Lakshmi, Kusum and Shakti were sentenced to imprisonment. We were full of admiration and apprehension. One part of us was fighting the British, the other part in college was imbibing assiduously the intellectual traditions of the British and Western thought. We learnt to know about ancient India through Ishwari Prasad and modern India through P.E. Roberts. Little did we realize, nor did our teachers by and large present, a critique of the viewpoints of these distinguished historians. We were even less self-conscious of the fact that we were living the history of the immediate results of the Act of 1935. For us it was intellectual fare, exciting but not critical. The Marxian view points and nationalist history was in its embryo. Some of us read Sunderlal's "Bharat Mein Angrezi Raj" clandestinely. The book is still banned.

At home the atmosphere was different. The consequences of 9th August were the direct experience of home life. Bishambar Nath Pandey, Keskar, Aruna Asaf Ali, Achyut Patwardhan, Biju Patniak were all in and out in different garbs at different times of these days. We learnt of the polarities of views in respect to World War II. The supporters of the Allies and the Axis powers respectively asserted their points of view vehemently. Bets were made on who would win the war by slitting veins and writing in blood. We knew there were the congress, the socialists and the Royalist camps. Each was traversing a particular path towards freedom. There were vehement discussions and disagreements, juxtaposed with

great human geniality and friendship. All under one roof. However the precise link with the study of history and the drama of contemporary history of which we were a part eluded us partially if not wholly.

As students of English literature we were under a spell of another type. Now Prof. Mukherjee took us through the etymology of each single word of *Richard II*: old English, Middle English and Elizabethan English. We were impressed but also not altogether appreciative of his accent from Oxford. *A History of English Literature* by Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian were our bibles under the arms and pillow. We quoted passages adnauseam. We lived vicariously the life of Pre-Renaissance, Renaissance, Reformation, Restoration, Romantics and Victorians. Each sentence was full of meaning and significance. We made no efforts nor were encouraged to relate it to the history and literature of our own past and present. We partially understood the nuances of Spenser's *Fairy Queen* for its imagery but were quick to quote Milton's *Paradise Lost* in and out of season. We knew passages by heart and used them in debate. Lucifer and Mephistopheles were familiar terms but whether we should question the primary concept of original sin or the absolute confrontation of good and evil was beyond our mental landscape.

As always Shakespeare was a favourite specially as taught by Sir Maurice Gwyer and later Dr. S. Dutt. Sir Maurice made the comedies come alive. The Jurist in him was in his full element while teaching *As you like it*. Dr. S. Dutt was at his best and most memorable as the teacher of *Macbeth* and most of all *King Lear*. The latter would forget everything as he read aloud and explained Act III and IV of *King Lear*. His rendering and explanations came from a deep experience of the human predicament. It was only much later that the full impact of his teaching became clear to us.

Besides these two who taught in the University (honours classes were all held in the University with students from all colleges, an impressive number of nineteen students was the total strength) there were many others in the college, young lecturers, Mr. Gupta and particularly Sarup Singh (later Principal and then Governor of Gujarat). Sarup Singh worked

hard on each of the five English honours students. At one point Byron was his favourite. We knew the Ocean backwards and forwards. But he also loved Keats; he taught the Odes, Nightingale and Grecian Urn in an unforgettable manner. Never could you forget these poems, once you had read them with Sarup Singh. He, more than any other teacher, was responsible for inculcating a discipline of reading all the critical literature on particular periods and authors. As tutor, it was his duty to supplement the University lectures of Sir Maurice and Dr. S. Dutt and Prof. Samuel Mathai (for language). This task he carried out painstakingly. He insisted on our being fully conversant with Bradley on Shakespeare as also Wilson Knight and others. He insisted on our perusing every line of the biographies of authors in the EML series. A combination of all these teachers inculcated an abiding habit of library reading. We hunted for books, carried loads on our cycles and vied with each other on the latest publication.

A. B. Bhattacharya insisted on our writing tutorials and essays. He corrected them painstakingly, as did S. Dutt. Indeed S. Dutt's correction seemed like red ants running through the page. There was room for discussion and there was flexibility of time. The classes would go on for long hours. We went to the residence of teachers and they came home. There was no dearth of attention and care.

Prem Chand was the maker of debaters. He taught us to argue well, to take positions and defend our stand. Kumar Dev with his husky voice was the supreme debater with D.K. Sayal as the most vociferous one. The Parliament elections were the training ground for the future. We fought elections but without a tinge of real politics outside influencing us. There were the students Federation and the students union but without the strings. We were first and last all nationalist and minor players in the struggle for freedom.

As I said earlier, there were the twin compulsions or attraction for the struggle for freedom and political independence and for all that was English /European in thought and intellectual disciplines. We aspired for one and were immersed in the other. We did not carry either as burden. It was only later, much later that it dawned upon us

that the aspirations for a free India were not matched by an equal or adequate comprehension of the complexities of our present. We were also not fully informed or equipped to know or realise the full implications of our being members of a complex plural society.

Hindu College was the fertile ground affectionately nurtured by the faculty which prepared us for a liberal education and catholic outlook.

The realities that we would face as the first generation of educationists, administrators, legislators and politicians of Independent India soon after our graduation in 1948 were dreams of a utopia. We had to learn slowly and gradually that great as the education was, specially its curricula, it also distanced us intellectually from the very soil of our land. We did not realise that we were both the children of Macaulay and of the Orientalist discourse.

We were innocent and happy members of a social process of great magnitude. As participants in a great transition from the imperialist past to the making of a nation we were a well meaning, highly committed community of optimistic utopians. We could feel intensely and sincerely, could argue and debate, but we were not trained to analyse as insiders the structures which had been built by the British for our education and the governance of our country. The disjuncture did not hit us. Indeed we haven't faced upto it even today fifty years later.

It was our generation which took the reigns of actual governance at many levels as IAS or teachers and scientists, philosophers or politicians. Necessarily it became a long and tiring path of unlearning. But the healthy, hardy, education of Hindu College had prepared us also for this unlearning. Its robust and free atmosphere facilitated a mental attitude of embarking upon adventures of mind and action. Dr. Indra Sen, the Philosophy teacher left Hindu College to join Aurobindo, Dr. S. K. Saksena went to Hawaii, to return in part to Indian philosophy. Dr. Daya Krishna, a senior contemporary, took and is still taking journeys in many directions on the intellectual traditions. Rai Krishna became a nationalist-economist, and Giri Lal the propounder of Swadeshi causes. Lakshmi Jain travelled via co-operative movements to Vinoba

Bhave. These were circuitous paths to roots but it was Hindu College and its intellectual atmosphere that made it possible. In this sense, the College did not cater to the high elite. It helped the ordinary middle class to tread new paths and make small beginnings in the bye lanes and highways of life.

To everyone in the Kashmere Gate building, the Principal, teachers, the playgrounds, Mithan Halwai, the librarians, the Lab. Assistants, I pay my tribute on this occasion.

Shiela Dhar*

In conversation with

Dr. Suroopa Mukherjee, Dr. Tapan Basu and Mr. Sunil Dua.

My connection with Hindu College was accidental. My family had decided that I should be a doctor and I was sent to Isabella Thoburn College in Lucknow for a Pre-Med. course. But I was very homesick there. I wanted to come back. And the only Pre-Med. course in Delhi was in Hindu College. So I did my Pre-Med. course from Hindu, passed out, and got admission in Lady Harding Medical College. I tried to be a doctor. I did not realise that I did not particularly want to be a doctor - it had never occurred to me.

In those days nobody used to ask a girl - ours was a big joint family - what she really wanted to do. There was nothing to do. If you were not very good-looking, you might as well be a doctor. Someone respectable. I was happy enough. I did not know that there was something that I could be better at. When I got into medical college and had cleared my first professional, my elder brother, who had been studying in U.S.A, came back after five years. I was very close to him. So he came back, with this fresh American approach and asked me, "Do you like what you are doing?" This was a revolutionary idea. I said "No, not particularly." To which he replied: "Then you are not going to do it. What do you want to do?" I said: "I want to study poetry and music and not medicine."

So he took the responsibility. He had a fight with my father and the joint family. By this time I was attached to Hindu College. I had already been there for two years. I knew the Principal and the teachers— it was homeground. Even in Pre-Medical we had studied some English Literature and there had been some wonderful teachers. I could think of nothing else except English Honours and just floated back into Hindu

**Student in Hindu College, 1943-50*

College. This was in 1947. I passed out from the course in 1950.

This was the most wonderful time of my life. But I can't say whether it was the College or the time of life for me, since it all coincided with an age when we were all finding a new freedom, a new way of looking at things. It was a coincidence. Thus, to me, the whole period is enchanted. It gave me the first taste of freedom, of being myself, a person. It was an intoxication, which is still with me. I can't pin point what it was. It gave me a sense of individuality that my large joint family had never been able to provide for me. We were thirty children in the large family—brought up like, you may say, mooli gaajar. There is no individual in such a situation. My grandfather ran the family and his clerk did all the school admissions. My mother did not know which class or even which school I was in. The girls went to Queen Mary's and the boys to Modern school. That was all.

From this situation I became an individual—when my brother asked me what I would like to do. I enrolled for music classes. I got a music teacher. I studied English Literature. It was like the opening of a magic world for me.

I have fantastic memories of Hindu College. So when I look at it now, the physical presence of that enchanted area, it is nothing like what is in my mind. It is like a dilapidated, horrifying, dirty, neglected place. But the Hindu College at Kashmere Gate, when I used to be there, was like a magical place.

The most wonderful teacher I ever had in English was Dr. Sarup Singh. He never tried to be an all-knowing person. He approached every piece of literature as a research project, like real discovery, not just culling out something from some book of criticism. He was, now that I think back, trying to teach us to develop our critical faculties in a very original way. I will never forget all the things that he taught us.

The Principal of Hindu College then was Dr. Thadani. Thadani Sa'ab was almost like a friend. There are legendary stories about his patriotism, his courage and fearlessness during the riots.

The College was involved in the politics of that era. The students' Federation and the Students' Congress were very active in those days. There were big events, like when Jai

Prakash Narayan came to address us. It seemed to come so naturally. Half the teachers wore khadi. Our English teachers wore khadi. A Professor in English with a British accent wore khadi and a Gandhi cap. He taught us Spenser. Thadani Saab was a great nationalist without wearing khadi. Lots of students wore khadi. What impresses me even now, when I think back upon it, about the College Parliament, the student leaders, all the speeches and the oratory—such good speakers—what impresses me is that they were so involved with the country and its future.

The College Parliament used to be held in an amphitheatre. All this was in the Westminster House style politics. My Hon'ble friend on the side opposite etc, all this Victorian style of political oratory. And Dr. Prem Chand, the Professor of Philosophy, used to teach everybody how to speak, elocution and debating. There were some very talented speakers. I, too, was a speaker. I wasn't talented at all because I did very well without knowing what I was doing. I had no understanding of politics, no understanding of what I was saying and no interest either. But Dr. Prem Chand taught one how to speak, so that it all seemed very natural. He did such a good job of it that we became the best debating team and we beat St. Stephen's College in the Mukarji Memorial contest. This was a great achievement, but if you ask me today what I said—it was just gibberish. Nothing. The C.R. Rajagopalachari formula— it was just like a kindergarden child being coached for a school play—you say your lines that you don't understand.

Politically, I was such a fool, I didn't know that one had to choose between the Students' Federation (the left group) and the Students' Congress. Since everything promised such a wonderful time, I joined both of them. There was going to be a rally in Bombay, SF rally- the lalach was that I would be able to go to Bombay. However, there was a problem- my family. All the teachers would come and argue with my father and my grandfather that we will look after her. There were two or three times that such delegations came, one to allow me to go to Bombay and the other to go to Allahabad for a debate. Jawahar Lal Nehru was present at that debate. I remember that he lost his temper trying to control the crowd, like a policeman. It was a very big occasion.

I think we were a remarkable College in those days because we were good at everything. We had an extremely active body of students.

As a woman student in those days, I didn't feel that the college was limiting or restricting me. In some ways it was, I guess, but, to me, the contrast between being on my own (my family) and being in college was too great. I was a tomboy and never considered myself as a woman, in that sense. There were about twenty women altogether and at least thousand boys. There was a Ladies Room with a chick and a guard outside. So if some boy wanted to meet someone, he would give some excuse (some matter concerning the Literary Union, for example) and the girl would come out and talk to the boy in the courtyard, in full view of everyone.

I was the only girl in my class. There were six boys. They got used to me after a while, but they never got used to some of the other girls. There was one very beautiful girl. The whole college was in love with her. She used to walk like an apsara. The boys who sat around her failed all the time. I was a 'regular guy,' and so they had no problems. I made good friends with them.

Once when we were being taught Spenser's love-sonnets, the teacher said, "I think you should leave". I asked him "Why?" He said, "Because its not entirely proper." There were incidents like this that I remember. Then there was this Professor who used to deliver very boring lectures. We were told that his father-in-law had also been a teacher of English and that our Professor had got these notes in his dowry.

I met my husband through Hindu College. He studied and taught in Hindu College. He was a teacher of Economics and so he never taught me. The atmosphere was very casual; since the numbers were so small, it was all personalized. Our tutorials were held outside in the open—under a tree, sometimes even in the University Garden. Occasionally Dr. Sarup Singh would say "Bore ho gai. Chalo zara aaj gaana sunayo." In fact, it was he who introduced me to my husband. One day, while we were having a tutorial, it started to rain and Dr. Sarup Singh said, "I have a friend. Let's go there". So we ran and took shelter in Gwyer Hall in my husband's room.

He was, at that time, the Warden of Gwyer Hall. That's how I first met him.

I got to know later that my husband (who is very, very political while I am the most apolitical person) and others were going round in a car, during the Partition riots, into the most affected areas, picking up bodies and saving people.

The trouble about reminiscences is, as I said before, the magic comes from the time of life and you just reflect it onto the situation. Its not that Hindu College was giving me everything. It was just my situation. So many winds are blowing of different kinds, to which you are contributing. Then everything fades and jades.

Inder Sharma*

For someone like me who graduated gradually, the eight years of the College life were certainly not only formative years but very rewarding ones.

Formative because I joined the College as an extremely shy introvert and probably most ill suited. I started wearing my pants for the first time on joining the College.

Formative because seniors pushed you around and you felt very uncomfortable in the company of girl students. I was a student of pre-medical, to start with.

My first friend and philosopher was the famous Banwari, the keeper of the College cycle stand. He was a faithful money lender, cigarette provider, conveyer of messages and periodically helped with the books to read during the examination.

One was very over-awed by Principal Thadani. He had a dominating personality but behind the stern exterior there was a heart of gold, ever eager to guide his students.

Two other personalities who left an indelible impression on me were Professor R.R. Gupta and Professor Prem Chand. The first one tried to educate me in English and guided me along the slow and steady steps of student organisations like UNSA and Student Congress. He was a romanticist and followed Shelley and Keats in daily life.

As far as Prof. Prem Chand was concerned he probably had the greatest role to play in the formation of my personality and made my years in the College the most rewarding ones. He gave me confidence, courage to stand up in public and to debate; a training that has stood me in good stead throughout my life. I could always, with my bluff and debating skills, cover up the lack of my intellectual capabilities. He was not formally my Professor because I ended up doing my Masters in Economics, but like many others I enjoyed attending his

**Student in Hindu College, 1945-1953*

classes. I copied the fashion of holding a cigarette loosely dangling from the lips, holding a cigarette tin in one's hand and learnt to admire the singing and dancing at Mehfil. He was a teacher of LIFE.

Three locations also had a role to play in my college life. The first was the Imli Tree where one sat and admired the passing beauties; the second Mithan Halwai's Shop for his Bhedwin and Lassi on very liberal credit terms; and lastly the Amphitheatre which turned out to be the arena of one's life.

The last but not the least significant contribution that the College made to my life was that while it failed to make a good student out of me it gave me an excellent wife. Today when the College celebrates its century one bows in respect to ones Alma Mater and is grateful for its endowments. May we all continue to bring credit to the fair name of Hinduites.

R.W. Desai*

The creation of The Globe Society in 1957 was an attempt to put Hindu College on the 'Theatre in English' map of the capital. The first expression of this endeavour was a production of J.B. Priestley's *Laburnum Grove*, a fairly early play not as yet fully representative of the dramatist's later concerns with the dislocation of conventional time-patterns, yet hinting at this concern. The production relied to a great extent on subtle variations in lighting effects in order to suggest different time slots and was, I think, now in retrospect, a good 'first play' with which to venture into hitherto uncharted waters, as far as Hindu College was concerned. The cast was not unmanageably large—a total of six—most of whom belonged to the Pre-Medical Ist and IInd year classes, a course long since abolished, but which was in those years a compulsory prerequisite for those intending to study medicine. Inevitably, many of the students admitted to this course were bright, articulate, enthusiastic, and these traits were reflected in the lively performances that they gave on three successive evenings in the college auditorium.

The next production, the following year, was Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, a far more daunting and challenging endeavour and, despite some engaging scenes in which Orlando (K.C. Mehra), Rosalind (Preeti Singh), Celia (Leela Venkataciarya), Jacques (Dave Ghatak), and Touchstone (Din Dayal) gave commendable performances, the production as a whole failed to do justice to what had been regarded by critics in general of the pre-Critical Theory decades as one of Shakespeare's sunniest comedies.

After this not unqualified success, the Society decided to engage in introspection while simultaneously trying to obtain funds from the College authorities to equip the stage and the auditorium, but particularly the stage, with the necessary

*Student in Hindu College, 1951-56, subsequently teacher in the Department of English, Hindu College, 1956-66.

mechanical devices to ensure that the production went through without ludicrous pitfalls being encountered, like the curtains refusing to close at the end of the scene. With two productions to its credit, however dubious their merit, the Society did have something to show for itself, and the Principal, Staff, and Governing Body were apparently convinced that the College did possess the potential to continue on the trail that had been blazed.

The next production in 1961 was *Macbeth* with K.C. Mehra in the title role and this production, like its predecessor, was a mixed breed with, however, the positive elements outnumbering the negative, so there was still room for optimism. There were some good, even perhaps powerful, scenes, some not so good, and some bad. Looking back, I'd like to raise the question — were we being too ambitious in trying to present Shakespeare? Further, should amateurs ever try to produce Shakespeare? Shakespeare, as we all know, has such a long stage tradition that any troupe daring to enter his territory is imperilled by the very act of so doing. Shakespeare himself has several passages on the acting profession (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*, to name just two plays in which are indicated the reefs and shoals that lie in wait for the uninitiated). At times he seems to suggest that all acting is, by its very nature, a flawed human activity, a conclusion particularly comforting for amateurs.

In 1962 the Globe Society presented *Julius Caesar* which was, I think, its best production, and its last. Rangachari as Antony, Dave Ghatak as Brutus, Sudhir Agarwal as Cassius, and Gul Kapadia as Portia were outstanding, the most memorable scenes in the production being Antony's "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" oration and the quarrel scene between Brutus and Cassius on the eve of the battle at Phillipi.

The Globe Society's presence was brief but significant. During its lifetime the Society had two secretaries, both of them boys whose terms ran consecutively: Yaduvansh Mathur, small built, gentle, soft spoken, inoffensive who, alas, died a year after passing out from the college with his B.A. degree; and then Satendra Nandan from Fiji, tall and strapping, who, in later years, went on to become Education Minister in his country; next, an author, and presently Professor of English at

the University of Canberra as well as Director of its Creative Writing Programme. The significance of the Society's five-year existence, from 1957 to 1962 was, I think, in its demonstrating the College's ability to present plays in English that were acceptable, even enjoyable, if judged by the fairly modest yardstick that would be appropriate for a college production. It was now clear that no single institution had a monopoly over plays in English, that given sufficient zeal and expertise on the part of the faculty, Hindu College students could do it if they wanted to. Nothing was beyond them. Equally important, the Society knit together students from various disciplines and backgrounds in a common endeavour, to enter for a few magic moments the ephemeral world of artificial lighting and greasepaint in a collective enterprise that broke down barriers and demanded from them commitment, responsibility, and imagination, not for the obtaining of good marks or good grades, but to uphold the image of Hindu College as one of the premier institutions of the country.

B.M. Bhatia*

Hindu College, Delhi, belongs to a trimuverate of three higher education institutions bearing the same name started in a span of 100 years. Hindu College, Calcutta, which is now known as Presidency College was established in 1816. Hindu College, Delhi, came in 1899. Hindu College, Banaras which later was turned into Banaras Hindu University, came in the second decade of the present century. There was nothing common between these three institutions except the name, and the fact that the inauguration ceremony of Hindu College, Delhi, on 15th May, 1899 in the small building in Sita Ram Bazar in the Walled City was performed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya who later founded Hindu College, Banaras which in a couple of years became Banaras Hindu University.

The founder of Hindu College, Delhi, was Lala Shri Krishan Dass Gurwale. He was the scion of the topmost and richest family of the Gurwale Delhi. In early nineteenth century, the family was called by the Britishers as "the Rothschilds of Northern India" because of the great riches the family possessed. During the "Mutiny" or India's First War of Independence, the family supplied eighteen boat loads of grain and victuals to the rebel forces of Bahadur Shah Zafar. But when approached by the British Resident for a cash donation for the "war" effort of the British Government against the "mutineers" the head of the Gurwale (father of Sri Krishan Dass Gurwale) expressed his inability to give any donation on the plea that he was out of resources.

After the "mutiny" was over, the British Government attached a large chunk of Gurwale family property as a punishment for the family aiding the rebels. That marked the end of the fabulous riches that the family had acquired through its trading activities and banking business during the Mughal times.

**Teacher in the Department of Economics, Hindu College, since 1951 and subsequently Principal of the College till 1980.*

Incidentally the appellation "Gurwale" that the family bore was given to it by the people. The family used to provide water and "gur" (jaggery) free of cost for horses and bullocks of the carts which brought merchandise to the city. Hence, the name "Gurwale".

The inspiration for starting Hindu College at Delhi came from the felt need of Delhites for having, in the city, an institution that would impart Western education sans Western culture. St. Stephen's College started in 1870s was already there, but it was seen as a Westernised institution that promoted Western culture among its students. Traditional families felt upset about the prospect of their children getting westernised if they joined the St. Stephen's College. Hence, the Hindu College came into existence.

The word "Hindu" in this context denoted Indians and not narrowly those of the Hindu religion. From the start the College admitted Muslim students along with the Hindu students without any type of discrimination between the two. It would be interesting to note in this connection that the teaching staff of the College at the start consisted of four teachers, a Principal, a Vice-Principal (both Bengali gentlemen), a Pandit teaching Sanskrit and Hindi and a Moulvi teaching Urdu and Arabic. While the Principal got a salary of Rs.100 and Vice-Principal Rs.80 per month, the two other teachers, one a Hindu Pandit and the other a Muslim Moulvi each drew Rs.25 a month. Incidentally it may be added that the salary of head clerk was Rs.8 and that of the office clerk Rs.5 a month, while the sweeper, behesti (water carrier), punkha coolie and peon got 8 annas a month.

Eleven students were admitted to the first year class. Among them was Shri Ram who was later to build up the DCM empire and was to become Chairman of Governing Body of the College. He remained Chairman till his death in 1963 when his son Bharat Ram took over the Chairmanship. Lala Bharat Ram continues to hold that office with distinction till today.

The College can boast of having among its alumni top industrialists, eminent scholars, political leaders, secretary level administrators in the government, distinguished sportsmen, committed social workers, prominent journalists,

leading doctors and reputed lawyers. It will be making an insidious distinction if I mention a few names among the old Hinduites who have made their mark in life and yet I cannot resist the temptation of mentioning a few that easily come to mind. Khub Chand and Nakul Sen are among two ICS officers produced by the College. Late Giri Lal Jain, Editor, Times of India and H.K. Dua, former Editor of Hindustan Times, are among the top journalists produced by the College. Late Raj Krishna, the internationally known economist at Delhi School of Economics was class fellow of Giri Lal Jain. Incidentally it may be mentioned that in the year 1945, five students of the College stood first in M.A. examination of Delhi University in their respective subjects and won gold medals. These were Giri Lal Jain (History), Raj Krishna (Economics), Sita Ram (English), J.N. Kapoor (Mathematics) and Daya Krishna (Philosophy). L.C. Jain who was our Ambassador in South Africa recently was in the same batch of students as Giri Lal Jain, Raj Krishna and J.N. Kapoor. Lalit Bhasin, a practicing lawyer, has earned international honours in the legal profession. He is President of the Society for Afro-Asian Studies which is engaged in promoting research in economic, political and social developments in countries of the African and Asian continents. Among the businessmen produced by the college, Inder Sharma, the Managing Director of Sita Travels, stands out as a shining example of rising so high by dint of integrity and ability. He has pioneered the development of tourism and travel industry in the country. He can indisputably be called the leading light of that industry in the country today. Prakash Bhandari of this College was, probably, the first cricketeer from Delhi to don a test cap while Manjit Dua, another alumunus, for several years remained the reigning champion of table tennis in the country. More than a dozen of joint secretary level IAS officers at present are old Hinduites. Pradeep Puri, Hardeep Puri, Ranga Chari, Surinder Khanna and H.S. Jassal are alumni that belong to that category. Among the women students, Kapila Vatsyayan who retired as Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry and was later Chairperson of the Indian Council of Cultural Affairs stands out as the foremost product of the College. The present Principal of the College who is the first woman Principal of the

College in its long 100 years history, is herself an old student having studied in the College for 6 long years.

To Hindu College education has always meant all-round development of a student's personality. The College has throughout been known as much for academic excellence as for development of extra-curricular activities like public speaking, dramatics, painting, music and sports.

Hindu College Parliament is an institution unique to this College. Started decades before India got the freedom from foreign rule and established its parliament, the College Parliament in fact functions on the pattern of the parliament of a country. The Principal of the College is ex-officio President of Hindu College Republic. The Speaker of the Parliament is a member of the teaching staff of the College who is nominated by the Principal to act as Speaker. The Prime Minister is elected every year by the students. The candidate who loses in the Prime Minister's election automatically becomes Opposition Leader. The Prime Minister appoints his own cabinet. It is the cabinet which is given responsibility of funds allocation to various student societies and associations in the college. The entire student fund collected by the college while collecting tuition fees is placed at the disposal of the Prime Minister who has to prepare the budget which earmarks funds for various functions. This budget has got to be approved by the Parliament. This not only gives training to students in the working of the parliamentary system of government but also a sense of participation-cum-responsibility in managing student affairs and activities in the College.

The College Parliament invites eminent leaders from outside to address it. Practically all top leaders of India's freedom struggle have addressed this College Parliament. It is a long list but mention may be made of Mahatama Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, M.A. Jinnah, the Ali brothers of the Khilafat Movement, Madan Mohan Malviya, B.B. Desai, Morarji Desai and Dr. J.C. Kumarappa among others who attended the Hindu College Parliament, some of them doing so more than once.

Hindu College was in the forefront of India's freedom struggle. The Quit India procession in Delhi in August 1942

was organised by Hindu College students with L.C. Jain and Raj Krishna in the lead. The procession came out of Hindu College gates in Kashmere Gate and was stopped there by the police. No arrest was made and students were dispersed outside the gate by the police. The College was sealed by the police and it remained so for a few days until, through the intervention of Mr. Sergeant, an Englishman, at that time Chairman of Higher Secondary Education Board of Delhi and Ajmer, the Home Member in the Viceroy Executive Council ordered the unsealing of the College. This is just one of the several instances that illustrate how involved the College was in India's freedom struggle.

The College in its long history has had a succession of excellent teachers on its faculty who not only were extremely popular with their students but also made name for themselves in the world of learning outside. Principals Sen, Thadani and Bhattacharya, the three successive principals in the pre-independence days served as role models for other faculty members both as teachers and scholars. At least five of the teachers of the College rose to Vice-Chancellorship of universities, two of them viz Dr. B.N. Ganguli and Dr. Sarup Singh of Delhi University itself. Dr. B.R. Seth, who was Head of Mathematics Department in the College, became Vice-Chancellor of Dibrugarh University in Assam and Dr. J.N. Kapur of the same department, of Meerut University in Uttar Pradesh. The present writer took leave from principalship of the College to have a short stint as Vice-Chancellor of Jodhpur University in Rajasthan.

Teachers of the College always maintained a perfect rapport with their students both inside the classroom and outside. In its long history of 100 years the College has not known any student strike against the authorities or against an individual teacher. I remember only one strike of half a day organised by students to press for their demand for funds from UGC for building a new auditorium in place of the old one that had been destroyed by fire in July 1966. The strike took the form of a march of students from the College premises to the Vice Chancellor's office. The march was led by the Principal i.e. myself. The result : we got a letter from Secretary UGC, Mr. Chabra, within 24 hours sanctioning grant

of 50 percent of approved construction expenses of the new auditorium. In this context, I must here acknowledge the tremendous support I received from old and current students as well as from colleagues on the teaching faculty in raising the rest of the 50 percent of the expenses for building the hall. But for that support it would have been impossible to build such a magnificent auditorium and that too in a short period of four years. The auditorium has been the envy of all Colleges in the campus, in fact of all Colleges of the university as a whole, for the quality of its accoustics, stage size, sound equipment, and seating design. In several respects it beats the university's own Convocation Hall in the Arts Faculty.

I may conclude this article on a personal note. I spent 29 years in the College as a teacher, including 16 years as Principal. This was the happiest period of my life, emotionally, socially, intellectually and career-wise. The emotional satisfaction I got from this College cannot be easily described in words. The response I got from the student community to my pleas on various occasions was simply amazing. In the very first year of my principalship, resident students started bursting crackers inside the hostel building about a week before the Diwali day. I heard the sound in my house and walked up to the hostel. Instead of rebuking and reprimanding them for their act, as would be the wont of stern administrators, I told them that their fun of playing with fireworks inside the hostel building carried with it the risk of the building catching fire. Could they not postpone their festivities to the Diwali day itself when, I promised, I would join them in the celebration. They agreed immediately to my proposal. The fireworks material that some of them had kept in their respective rooms was brought out and collected at one place. I handed over the whole material to a senior resident student for safe custody. On the Diwali day as per promise I went to the hostel to celebrate Diwali. All the resident students as well, gathered outside in front of the hostel building. We had play of fireworks, distribution of sweets, singing of songs and anecdote telling for two hours. Later students went up the hostel building and lit candles all around the roof top. Next year the festivities were extended to the main college building. About a fortnight before Diwali, students on their

own organised a social service group which took upon itself the task of cleaning the class rooms, staff room of the teachers and painting of doors including those of Principal's office. At night they lit up the entire college building with candle light. For several years this remained the routine practice at Diwali time.

This small beginning led to my building up a deep sentimental rapport with the students. At dinner time occasionally I would walk down to the dining hall of the hostel and moving from one table to the other, I would chat with the students. Sometimes I would sit down with a group of students to share meals with them. That generated a great deal of bonhomie and informality among us. Similarly, in the day time, during working hours of the College I would occasionally walk down into the girls common room and chat with the girl students. They would tell me if they had any problem with the common room facilities or if they needed some additional facility there. I would take note of the request and within the available means do the needful. A single instance would show the degree of confidence I won from the girl students of the college as a result of such gestures. We entered our front lawn for competition in the University Annual Flower Show. A team of three experts, one of them being a lady from ICAR, came to examine the lawn in afternoon. While looking at the green lawns and admiring the rose beds all around, the lady member of the team asked me in all seriousness if we had any girl students in the College. I said yes we had more than 500 girls in the College and that their common room was just about 200 ft away from the lawn. "Then how do you save these roses from the girls?" she queried. I told her that to my knowledge there was not a single instance of a girl or boy student plucking a flower from the College lawns. Our students, I added, were a responsible lot and they were as much interested in giving an attractive look to the College premises as myself or for that matter any teacher. She made no attempt to hide her amazement over this statement for she could not believe that in those days of strike and unrest in educational institutions, there could be in existence such a College in which teacher-student relationship was so harmonious. Could a Principal wish for more than this

by way of harmony prevailing in the institution he was heading?

I owe the larger part of my intellectual growth also to this College. I did my Ph. D. while serving as Head of Economics Department in the College and published six research books during my sixteen year long tenure of Principal. I also earned the national fellowship of ICSSR from 1971 to 1973 during those sixteen years. In those very sixteen years I began writing regularly for The Statesman on current economic problems and issues. Those articles brought me good name and fame in the highest political administrative and academic quarters in the country.

Career-wise, it was during the period of principalship of the College that I was appointed member of so many Government Committees. These included Central Wage Board (Road Transport Industry), National Minimum Wage Advisory Board, Expenditure Commission, Steering Group of Planning Commission and Director of State Bank of India. I served in the last mentioned capacity for 12 years, from 1973 to 1984. I also got Vice-Chancellorship of Jodhpur University during those years but feeling alienated in that position, resigned the post and returned to the cosy turf of Hindu College where once again I began to feel finally at home.

The principalship of the College enabled me to build close contacts with top political leaders, bureaucrats, military leaders, and businessmen. They all came in touch with me in connection with admission of their wards in the College. Some of the names that readily come to my mind in this context are Fakhruddin Ahmed who later became President of India; B.D. Jatti, Vice-President of India; Dr. Jagan Nath Mishra, Chief Minister of Bihar and his brother L.N. Mishra at that time Union Minister for Railways; Babu Jag Jiwan Ram; L.C. Stokes and several others too numerous to count.

I retired from the College almost two decades ago. But the institution still continues to take the very breath of my life. My attachment to it makes me feel as if I am still a part of the College. This great temple of higher learning has completed 100 years of service to the country in nation building. At the dawn of second century of its life, I send my best wishes for its future to be even more glorious than the past.

Lalit Bhasin*

Normally one's success in career or profession is attributed to the institutions where one has studied. But in my case I attribute my very existence to my College—Hindu College. Hindu College not only gave me the education, which became the foundation for taking up law practice later on, but also gave me my wife, Madhu who bore me four loving daughters. I have grand children also. I met Madhu in the College and we got married soon after completing our education and led a very happy family life for thirty years until she died of lung cancer in 1991. I have married again and my wife Nina and son Aditya join me in paying a tribute to the everlasting memory of Madhu and to the College. We have instituted some Awards/Memorial Lectures in the memory of Madhu Bhasin. As such my destiny and my family are all linked up with this great institution.

The College gave me not only education but also provided me with great opportunities of 'opening up' from a shy, reserved and introverted student, to an active, social and responsible leader of the student community in my College and in the University of Delhi. The College gave me opportunity to mingle with fellow students and students from other colleges of the University. This brought about such a remarkable and pleasant change in my personality that I developed self confidence to the extent that I could successfully contest for the top-most position that a student can aspire for in the college—the Prime Ministership of the College Parliament. I learnt a lot from this great institution of College Parliament under the stewardship of Professor Prem Chand who was the permanent Speaker of the College Parliament.

**Student in Hindu College, 1955-60.*

During my tenure as the Prime Minister we celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the College, which was over one week and was a unique event in the history of the College. All this training and grooming has stood me in good stead as a lawyer. I have a reasonably good law practice and have held positions of honour in the profession having been the chairman of the Bar Council, Secretary General of the International Bar Association and General Secretary of the Bar Association of India. All these achievements I owe to my College—Hindu College.

I am proud to be associated with the activities of the College in general and with the Centenary Celebrations in particular. I have fond hopes that the College will continue to remain one of the greatest educational institutions of the country. There would be hundreds and thousand like me who have benefited from the bounty of learning from the College – but the College is one, and there will be millions more who would enter the sacred premises of this great Institution in future, and I wish the College many more Centenaries. Dr. Kavita Sharma, present Principal of the College, deserves full credit for ensuring the success of the Centenary Celebrations.

Satya M. Rai*

Looking back at my teaching experience at Hindu College, Delhi University, after 40 years (six years after retirement) is no doubt covering a large canvass. Many memories have faded, but some are still etched firmly on my mind.

Having been the first student to be awarded a Ph.D. degree from the Indian School of International Studies (then housed at Sapru House and affiliated to Delhi University), and being the first woman to be awarded this degree from the Political Science Department of Delhi University, I had certain academic aspirations. I did not want to teach only the under-graduates and wished to continue research and help in guiding research. Hindu College, a prestigious academic institution with a long, liberal tradition seemed to be a good option. At the time of the interview (I was the only woman candidate out of a dozen applicants), Sir Shri Ram, the then Chairman of the Governing Body of the institution, among other questions, enquired whether I would be able to control boys. Having been used to public speaking, my reply obviously was that I was confident of doing so.

I, however, had some apprehensions on this score. I was told that there was a woman lecturer in Kirori Mal College. When I went there to find out from her about her experience in a co-educational institution, she was not there but I was told by her colleagues that, yes, there was one bechari (pitiable soul). On that day I decided to accept the offer to join Hindu College as the first woman lecturer and never to earn the epitaph bechari. I joined Hindu College in August 1959.

Despite the apparent confidence, I had some working fears (I had taught four to seven years in a Government College for Women, Amritsar). When Dr. N.N. Aggawal, the then head of the Political Science Department of the College, accompanied me to introduce me to the class of nearly eighty students, I felt

**Teacher in the Department of Political Science, Hindu College, 1959-93.*

a little nervous. But there was pin-drop silence when I was teaching and as I came out I heard boys saying that they had come prepared to harass me but were so absorbed that they could do nothing. That was my proudest day in Hindu College.

In the staff room, too, I was received with mixed feelings. I was a novelty and hence welcome. But there was, on the part of my colleagues, a sense of loss of freedom since they felt that they could no longer talk about everything they wanted to in my presence. Many did not know how to behave with a female colleague. While sitting with me they would have two chairs on either sides. But there were some exceptions and these colleagues tried to make me feel comfortable and treat me on equal footing. There were some who would raise their eyebrows if I accepted a lift from a male colleague on a two-wheeler or a car and there were others who were just indifferent. I was, however, quite confident about myself, and so was my husband, Lajpat Rai, about me and I never bothered about such innuendoes. On the whole, I had very cordial relations with my colleagues and being the only female, I had to define my relationship with my male colleagues according to my own assessment and understanding.

Teaching in the College was a pleasure and it gave me job-satisfaction as well. The students were quite responsive and there were hardly any absentees in my classes. It was gratifying to hear from them that they never wanted to miss my classes. I, too, tried to be as helpful and friendly to them as possible and always considered myself responsible to the students.

I was also associated with the Department of Political Science at Delhi University for M.A. teaching as well as guiding M.Phil. and Ph.D. students in their research. As many as twelve M.Phil. and six Ph.D. students who worked with me were awarded these degrees. I was invariably involved in the academic activities of the department, including framing of courses and organising workshops. I edited a book for undergraduates in Hindi on "Colonialism and Nationalism" which ran into three editions and a number of reprints.

When I joined Hindu College, many people thought it would be a temporary phase in my career, but despite some very attractive offers, I never looked for greener pastures outside. I had job—satisfaction here and found human conditions conducive to my temperament. We had bright students who made their mark in various fields. I also did my own research work and published five books without taking study leave, but was on deputation with Indian Council of Historical Research for two years for their project on "Legislative Politics and Freedom Struggle in Punjab". This book was published in 1984.

My entry into Hindu College created a stir of sorts in the teaching community. Whereas some women teachers interpreted it as an encroachment on the male domain, others appreciated my courage and called it a path-breaking step. Some who joined later, could not stay long, and for almost a decade, I was the only woman teacher till others such as Dr. Saroj Bala and Dr. Tripta Wahi joined and stuck on. I am really pleased that after almost four decades of my joining in this great institution, now nearly forty percent of the teaching staff consists of women and the institution is headed by a woman, Dr. Kavita Sharma, who very graciously said to me "you opened the door for us".

When I joined, I was determined to prove that women are no less competent than men, convinced that the responsibility to prove this lay partly on me. I, therefore, participated in many curricular and extra-curricular activities like being in charge of UNSA, and of the Political Science Seminar Society, editing the college magazine, organising symposia, apart from activities relating to girl students like girls' common room, girls' sports, and girls' NCC (this was discontinued later).

The above account is not meant to magnify my individual role, but to focus on the issue of gender equality which has become one of the major discussion points all over the world to-day, including in India. Women are rightly demanding a place in all decision making bodies—both in political parties, as well as in the legislative and government bodies. It must be appreciated that equality will not be merely granted to them; they have to struggle for it. It is a right for which they have struggled for centuries and today at last many people concede it.

S.P.S. Chauhan*

I entered the portals of Hindu College in January 1960 and was interviewed by Shri Raj Narain Mathur, the then Principal. It was my first encounter with a man of great stature. I was young, just 19 years of age, and very nervous. However Mathur Sahib was extremely gracious and put me at ease. He told me that I could earn a place of respect and regard through devoted and dedicated service to the institution. The interests of the College, at all times, should reign supreme over everything else. Such were the first few lessons the Principal taught me during my initial months at Hindu College.

It is now a little more than thirty-nine years ago that I joined Hindu College as Assistant in the Administration. I was struck by its impressive buildings and manicured lawns. Hindu College stood in splendid isolation on the university campus. There was just St. Stephen's College across the road. At some distance away were the administrative buildings of Delhi University, the Gwyer Hall, hostel for students, Miranda House and the Arts Faculty building. Ramjas, Hans Raj and Kirori Mai Colleges had recently shifted to the campus, while the others were yet to be born. Even the adjoining residential or commercial colonies such as Roop Nagar and Kamla Nagar had not yet fully come up.

Hindu College itself was very small, with about nine hundred students including a hundred and fifty girls on its rolls, and about forty five teachers on its faculty. Classes consisted of not more than fifteen or twenty students each. There were six ministerial staff including the head clerk, five peons, three lab. bearers and one lab. assistant in Physics and Chemistry each; two lab. bearers and a lab assistant in Biology; and the librarian, a counter-clerk and two bearers in

**Associated with the College Administration since 1960, Administrative Officer since 1990.*

the library. There were four malis, two groundsmen and two chowkidars.

Those days there were no additional benefits in service available such as medical reimbursement, leave-travel concession, pension, etc. After retirement an employee or teacher was paid only his or her own Provident Fund which was deducted @ 8.33% of the basic pay every month, plus a matching contribution from the College. There were no other benefits and not even overtime payment for those who had to work after office hours or on Sundays and other holidays. All these additional service benefits came into existence only after 1973.

The climate in the College those days was in remarkable contrast to what we encounter today. The principal, teachers and employees of the College office were held in high esteem. There was no question of being disrespectful towards any staff member, no matter how much one might disagree with him or her. Strikes in the colleges and universities were more or less unknown. It was simply unthinkable that the employees or teachers would strike work over any grievance.

In those early years of my stay at Hindu College, there was a wonderfully warm rapport amongst all teachers, students and employees. Almost everybody knew everybody else and the ambience on campus was very healthy. I saw indiscipline on the part of students in the College for the first time in 1986, when over a trivial matter of an article in the College Magazine, some students harassed two teachers and sat on dharna in front of the Principal's office.

Immediately after I had joined my duties in the office, I was asked to assist Shri D.S. Mathur who was the Convenor of the Founder's Day Celebrations Committee, the Election Officer as well as the President of Sports and Games in the College. He was a thorough gentleman and a very popular teacher figure. For me that was excellent initiation to the institution. Ever since then I have striven hard to make a valuable contribution to the corporate life of this College in all its aspects. I hope I have succeeded in setting a fine example of single-minded dedication and unflinching devotion to the institution. But for all this, I owe earnest gratitude to many senior members of the faculty: Principals Dr. B.M. Bhatia, Mr.

P.C. Sood, Mr. P.C. Verma, as also Shri D.S. Mathur, Dr. H.S. Mehra, Sh. V.M. Misra, Dr. N.N. Agarwal, Sh. S. Maheshwary, Shri K.P. Mathur, Sh. G.C. Rampal, Dr. Mandhata Ojha, Dr. K.P. Sarbhai and Shri Man Mohan Sharma.

I was only nineteen when I joined service in this College. One day I was walking down the corridor to go to the Administration Office when a student approached me and asked me in which class I was studying! For a second I could not speak, then I replied: "I work in the office, I am not a student". The boy sheepishly walked away. The same boy after a few days came to me with his friends. One of his friends introduced me to this gentleman: "He is Manmohan Sood, who played in the Test Match in Madras a month ago and he is also the Captain of Delhi University Cricket Team which won the Rohinton Baria Trophy this year for the first time in the history of Delhi University". Since then Mr. Sood has been a good friend of mine. Hardly a week afterwards, I was sitting in the office early in the morning when a tall boy came and wanted to use the telephone. I did not allow him to do so. He quietly left the office. After some time Mr. Gillu, the then Principal's peon came with that boy and requested me to allow him to phone from the office and told me that he was K.C. Mehra who had acted in the film 'Meim didi' and was a bonafide student of the College, a member of the English Honours class! After making the call Mr. Mehra said, "Thank you, Sir".

Next day, he came back with a beautiful girl. K.C. introduced her: "She is Miss Gul Kapadia, my co-artist in English plays". Later I came to know that Mr. K.C. Mehra, Miss Gul Kapadia and the cricketer Akash Lal were close friends who had acted in many English plays under the guidance of an English Department lecturer, Shri R.W. Desai (now Professor of English in Delhi University). Most girls liked dressing up formally then, wearing saris, putting up their hair in a bun, wearing bindis and make up. A group of such girls was popularly regarded as the 'Sari Brigade'. Gul Kapadia was one of them.

I also remember some other students, whose names I recount here, who became very close to me and who now hold top positions in industry, academics and services. All of them,

I feel, have great regard and respect for me. They are Satish Khullar, Late Charanjit Singh, Viresh Rastogi, S.P. Agarwal, Anil Jain, Dalip Roy Chowdhry, M.S. Azaad, Bobby Mathur, Arun Bhagat, K.C., R. N. Kaul, Akash Lal, Ravi Wahi and also the illustrious gang of K.C. Sharma, Kanwar Rajendra Singh, D.C. Gagera, Prakash Bhandari, Arun Pandya, Raj Bhargava, V.P. Singh, Anil Khanna, Lalit Bhasin and V.P. Chaudhry who had then just left the College but were still very much a part of the life of the College.

The most notable event of the academic year used to be the Hindu vs St. Stephen's cricket final match of the Inter-College Cricket Tournament. Even the girls of Miranda House, Indraprastha College and Hindu college itself who knew little about cricket and cared even less about cricketing skills would be dressed up in saris with matching make-up and bindis. The cricket match was a picnic and social event for them. A common opinion was that cricket was the king of games in those days. This fact was undisputed in Delhi University and had been virtually an axiom in Hindu College, with the glorious tradition that Hindu College had set by winning the trophy consecutively for nine long years since 1952. There was a healthy tradition whereby the traditional cricket rivals Hindu and Stephen's would entertain each other to dinner in each College disregarding the fact as to who had won the inter College Cricket Tournament. This cultivated harmonious relations and understanding between the rival teams, and the two sister institutions functioned in a spirit of cordiality and good neighbourliness throughout.

Hindu College was known for its cricketers and this list includes Prakash Bhandari, Man Mohan Sood and later Rajender Pal Singh, Rakesh Shukla, Surender Khanna, Sunil Walson, Gursharan Singh, currently Saba Karim, Ajay Jadeja, Nikhil Chopra and Rahul Sanghvi who have been capped for India, V Balaji Rao, Akash Lal, Anil Khanna, Gulshan Rai, Anil Jain, Vinay Lamba, Vinod Gupta, Hari Gidwani, Venkat Sundaran, Arvind Bhasin, Karun Dube, C.B. Mathur, Chatterpal Singhji, Sekhar Hardas, Roshal Lal, Hari Om, Jogeh Khattar, Ashwani Marhwa, Rohit Sahani, Anil Bhardwaj, Sunil Khanna, Asjit Jaipralashom, Ravi Dey, Anil Mathur, Raju Sethi, Rohit Talwar, Sanjay Chauhan, Tilak Raj, Sandeep Goyle, Murali

Kartik and Ashu Dani. All these cricket players would be rated as outstanding by any standard.

In 1964, Dr. B.M. Bhatia a senior faculty member took over the Principalship of the College. I was appointed Cashier of the College the very same year. There was no bank at that time - nor any calculating machines. All accounting work had to be performed manually. As a Cashier, I was dealing with all the students four/five times in a year, when they came to me to pay their dues. Fees during those years were charged every three months. This job brought me very close to the students of the College. The present Principal Dr. Kavita A. Sharma nee Aggarwal took admission in this College in 1967 in the B.A. (Hons.) English class. Once when she came in to pay the fees out of turn, I told her "Kavita come in queue at the window; please don't enter from this side." I always felt proud that during those days I knew all the meritorious students by their names as they would come to me for any work they might have in the office. During this time around 1966-67, I witnessed what must have been the most unfortunate event in the history of the College: the burning down of the College Auditorium. But by the year 1970, the superb new College Auditorium arose, phoenix like from the ashes of the old.

From 1964 to 1972 many outstanding students (including sportsmen) were in the College. I remember the names of some who were very prominent in those days: Sharad Maheshwari, Ms. Reva Lal, Kamal Kashyap, Hardeep Puri, Suresh Sapra, Subhash Sondhi, T.C.A. Rangachari, Chand Joshi, Kavita Agarwal, S.K. Pande, K.B. Thukral, V. Sundaram, Anand Chiripal, Guddu Puri, Vinay Lamba, the last mentioned an excellent cricketer. Lamba scored centuries in all the four years of his stay in the College in the Inter-College Cricket Finals. He was known to be a gentleman. It was sheer bad luck that he could not don the country colours despite his performances at national and international levels. Mr. Sandeep Khanna, who is now an Civil Service Officer, was awarded the 'Mark of Honour', the highest award of the College. The standards set by the College for this award are so high that students do not qualify for it every year. The first Mark of Honour was awarded in 1957 to Raj K. Bhargava a cricketer,

second in 1972 to Sandeep Khanna and third in 1988 to Sanjay Chauhan, also a cricketer. Till date, only three students have received this award. Many students of that period are today on the College faculty. They are Dr. Pratap Singh, Mr. D.N. Gupta, Mrs Suchitra Gupta (a very prominent radio/T.V. artiste who has also compered all important functions of the College including the Centenary Celebrations function), Dr. R.B. Nain, Dr. Subhash Chaudhary, Dr. Ram Saran and of course Dr. Kavita A. Sharma.

In 1971 Dr. Bhatia went on leave for two years. Shri P.C. Sood was appointed acting Principal. The very same year I was promoted to the Senior Assistant's position: second in command in the Hindu College Administration. I was transferred to the Administration Section. Student dealings got curtailed in view of my other assignments. But I maintained my contacts with all the popular students of the College, namely - Raj Kumar Oberoi, Rewat Kumar, Ram Avtar Sharma, Narender Rathore, Raminder Singh Jassal, Ranjan Chatterjee, Savita Mohan, N. Balachandran, Mukul Bawa, Umesh Talwar, Rakesh Mohan, Hari Gidwani, Rohit Sahney, Arvind Bhasin, Nand Kishore Bansal, Karun Dubey, Sanjeev Malik, Subhash Mathur, Anil Mathur, Sunil Walson - the last mentioned was a very good left arm fast bowler who went on to be a member of the Indian cricket team for the World Cup in 1982-83. It was my pleasure to allow him to stay at my place when he did not get hostel accommodation in his first year class in 1976. All the above now hold very high positions in services and business these days.

In 1973 Dr. Bhatia returned from leave and joined back as Principal of the College. From 1966-1972, Hindu College was very proficient in games and it won the Chancellor's Trophy consecutively for three years. All major sports championships were bagged by Hindu College during this time under the stewardship of Dr. A.K. Mittal, the President of Games. Our Winter Festival, Mecca, was started for the first time in Hindu College. Sanjay Srivastava, graduate of 1973 started this festival. Prior to this festival, cultural programmes were held every fortnight where only college students from Hindu College participated. No professional was allowed; no money, no sponsorship etc.

In July 1977, Dr. Bhatia became Vice-Chancellor of Jodhpur University and Shri V.M. Misra, who was Lecturer in Physics, was appointed Acting Principal. But Dr. Bhatia returned after four months only to the College and continued upto age sixty five and finally retired from the service of the College in August 1980.

Subsequently Sh. P.C. Verma of the English Department was appointed Principal. Many development projects were undertaken during his time. The sports complex, the renovated canteen, six classrooms and staffquarters were constructed. Even in terms of academic achievements the College did very well during those years. In the year 1984, our student Animesh Srivastava got the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship for the first time in College history. This international scholarship is awarded to three persons from India every year spanning the disciplines Medicine, Engineering, Arts, Social Sciences, Science. Next year again, in 1985, a Hinduite Mahesh Rangarajan was awarded this Scholarship. Both these students were very good debaters. In 1988 this honour was given to Sanjay Chauhan, a fine cricketer. Till date these three students are the only students of this College to have got this scholarship; two of whom were from Economics and one from History. Those years were really very good for the College.

Some other prominent students during this period were Ajay Verma, Ruchira Patni, Pranav Nanda, Amitabh Verma, Manoj Kalbalia, Vishal Bhardwaj, Rakha, Anu Agarwal, Leela Gandhi, Sonia Malhotra, Vandana Gurnani, Samir Modi, Ruchika Choudhry, Vijay Misra, Vidu Verma, J.K. Chowdhry, Vivek Suri, Anuradha Dhawan, Kumar Rajesh, Gursharan Singh, Sandeep Goyle and Saba Karim.

Only once in my entire career in Hindu College have I felt a certain dilemma regarding the relative ratings of my College and St. Stephen's College. In 1984 my son, an outstanding cricketer, who was among the top-10 junior cricketers of the country and Captain of Delhi State and North Zone Junior Teams, was admitted in St. Stephen's College in B.A.(Hons.) Economics. I was upset and did not know what to say to Hindu College compatriots. Mr. O.P. Dutta, DPE started cajoling me to bring him to Hindu College, but I could not take a decision. Ultimately Principal Verma personally requested

me to bring him to Hindu College. I thought St. Stephen's was a better college for B.A.(Hons.) Economics at that time. But I could not displease the Principal of the College and asked my son to join my College. The Principal across the road, Dr. Hala, was very angry with me about this decision. However, I have no regrets, as Sanjay went on to become a Rhodes Scholar and perform very well in his career.

Over the years, the College has changed and has grown fast. The strength of the students in the College has gone up by 125%, the faculty has doubled and the non-teaching staff quadrupled. Students' activities have increased tenfold. University examinations are held every year. Upto 1966, the overall control was with the Governing Body of the College. In 1966, model rules were framed and the UGC grant to college increased to 95%, wrenching financial control from the trust to the UGC. Before 1966, even a bill of paise 10 had to be signed by the Treasurer, Governing Body. From 1966 this authority was assigned to the Principal of the College who would be accountable to the UGC. The supervision of the selection of teachers and employees was also taken over by the University from the management.

The UGC conferred the status of 'extended college' on Hindu College in 1989. More non-teaching staff was appointed. A new post of Administrative Officer was created in the College and I was appointed on this position in March 1990. For the first time also two ladies, Ms. Rajesh Sharma and Mrs Suman Dutt Sharma, were appointed in the Administration in the same year.

During 1985-90, when I was Section Officer, Accounts there was no financial crises in the college. The UGC grant was regularly paid. In fact the financial crises started from 1992 when the UGC stopped payments for maintenance of the College buildings and did not release grants on other expenses. This cut forced the college to introduce an Establishment Fund during Principal Verma's tenure. When Mr. Verma retired in 1995 there was more than 50 lakhs of rupees in three College funds: The amount is still in the college & invested in FDRs—which can't be used for salaries; Establishment Fund—created in 1992; Development Fund—

created in 1984; Endowment Fund - created in 1980. All these funds were created during the tenure of Mr. P.C. Verma.

Subsequent to Mr. P.C. Verma's retirement as Principal of Hindu College, a person from the college faculty was unanimously recommended by the Selection Committee for appointment to this post. But due to infighting within itself, the Governing Body did not approve his appointment and this post was re-advertised. This was the first time in the history of the College that a person selected by the Selection Committee was rejected by the Governing Body. Then another person from outside the College was appointed Principal of the College. The new Principal, Dr. S. Maheshwari could not adjust to the new place as he was not attuned to the College traditions. He ultimately resigned in August, 1997. Then there was again a race for the Principalship. Dr. Mrs. Kavita A. Sharma took over as the Principal of the College in January 1998. She has the unique distinction of being the first woman Principal of a co-educational College in the country. She is young and dynamic and has manifold plans for the growth of the College. She has brought a change in the climate of the College in a very short period of time. After becoming the Principal, she has organised the Hindu College Website, introduced a new course, the BCA, and added several infrastructural facilities for all sections of the college community.

Over the years, the College has expanded beyond recognition.

Hindu College is a great institution, known all over the world. Its alumni are spread far and wide across the globe, and hold high positions in every walk of life. Generations of students will also remember Paanji's affectionate presence at the College gate. There were others too, who, if not employed by the College, were a regular part of the services which its members made use of. Students of the 1960s will remember Banwari, the cycle keeper and Panditji Chaatwala who always gave enigmatic answers about the cricket scores of Hindu and St. Stephen's matches. It was a general feeling among the students and the common people that if you are admitted in Hindu College or St. Stephen's College, your career would be secure.

Now the question arises: has Hindu College changed? Surely it has. Is the change too little or too much, for good or for worse? I don't really know. It has been more than a home to me. I have spent the long part of my life here and enjoyed every moment in the company of ever-changing generations of students. And it has been good to me.

Dr. Kavita A. Sharma, the present Principal was a student of this College when the College was at the top in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Perhaps she will be able to revive the old glory of the College. Let us hope for the best.

Bharat Ram*

*Dr. Bharat Ram was interviewed by Dr. Kavita A. Sharma
at his residence.*

- KS Sir, your family has been associated with Hindu College from its very inception. Considering that your father was enrolled as a student in the very first batch and then was its first Chairman, how did you feel when you became the Chairman of Hindu College after him?
- BR I must say I was surprised because I had been a student of St. Stephen's College.
- KS Is there any particular reason why you went to St. Stephen's while your father Sir Shri Ram was the Chairman of Hindu College?
- BR No particular reason, but at that time St. Stephen's enjoyed a better reputation and Hindu College was considered comparatively backward. It is no longer the case. Hindu College is considered at par with St. Stephen's College. I can say that some credit for that should be given to the management. My father went to Hindu College only for a few months and then joined his business.
- KS What are your recollections as a student of St. Stephen's College and what kind of interaction was there between the two colleges?
- BR It was one of healthy rivalry and competition, the kind of relationship that existed between Oxford and Cambridge.
- KS St. Stephen's, of course, being Cambridge.
- BR Yes that's right. My greatest interaction with Hindu College was in the field of sports as I represented

**Chairman, Governing Body, Hindu College, since 1963.*

- St. Stephen's in Hockey, Cricket and Tennis. In fact, I was the Captain of the Cricket team.
- KS Did you ever defeat Hindu College?
- BR Defeat and victory between the two colleges was quite evenly balanced. Hindu College was very good in sports. As I recall my college days, I must say that the biggest influence on me was that of Prof. Prem Chand. He was my greatest friend and lived with me till I got married. During my years as the Chairman, I have been lucky with my principals who I consider really to be the chief executives of the College. I firmly believe in this and I have tried to give the Principal as much power as possible. Also, I have tried to make the Governing Body see my point of view that it really should be an advisory body rather than a supervisory body.
- In my early years as Chairman, I relied heavily on Prof. Prem Chand for important decisions. He was not only a great scholar of Philosophy but also had a tremendous character. My father wanted him to become the Principal of the College but he refused, saying he was more interested in his work as a teacher than in administration. He had a tremendous influence over students and staff members, even those who were older than him. This was because of his character. He could be truly objective in a situation. It is his objectivity and impartiality that made him play an important role in choosing the principal and also because he was not interested in the job himself. Prof. Prem Chand had a lot of influence in moulding my own character.
- KS Your family, Sir, has been deeply involved with education and with the arts. Is there any particular reason for this?
- BR One important reason is my wife. She was very fond of music and my father who was very fond of her, wanted to do whatever he could to make her happy in this regard. Old artists like Pt. Omkarnath Thakur, Narayanrao Vyas, Paluskar, Allaudin Khan all of

them would come and stay at our house. Then, Uday Shankar and his troupe, Rukmani Arundale and so many others. There has always been music in the family. The Shri Ram Centre originally started from our house as the Indian National Theatre, because of my wife's interest together with Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya.

My father, too, had a great vision for education. He started Lady Shri Ram College from a small rented place in Darya Ganj. The Shri Ram College of Commerce began because he saw the pivotal role that would be played by Economics and Commerce. Again, Shri Ram Institute of Industrial Research came about as my father was interested in all round development. He saw it as an institution that would be self-supporting while providing Research and Development services to the industry.

My father was a visionary and was willing to nurture talent. Let me give you an example. Manu Bhai Shah who was Commerce Minister in the First Congress Government worked in our company for many years. He was a Chemical Engineer. He joined at around the same time as I started work in 1936. He was deeply influenced by Gandhi. He came from an average family but he laid down conditions. He told my father that he would be willing to work but would leave if Gandhi gave a call for any movement! And he did leave during the Quit India Movement in 1942 to rejoin only after independence.

KS You have seen and been involved in the development of higher education from pre-independence India to now. What changes do you think have taken place?

BR Well, to begin with, the most striking change is that now far more students go in for higher education than they did in my time. My own grandfather wanted me to join business after I had done my matriculation. It was my father who insisted that I go in for higher education because I had done very well in my matriculation, standing 3rd or 4th in my university.

KS But do you think this increase in numbers is good or bad?

BR In some ways it not a good thing. Many children who go in for higher education do not have the capacity to cope with higher education. Instead, there should be more vocational courses as in Germany and in many other countries. But the mental and social make up in our country is such that we do not give the same recognition to say an excellent tailor, highly skilled in his work, as we do to a clerk.

KS Isn't this a colonial mind set?

BR Yes, I agree with you, it is. After all, the British established these institutions to provide workforce for lower rungs of administration which they needed.

KS So what direction do you think higher education will take?

BR Well, I am very positive about it. Education, I am sure, will develop in the right direction. Communications, media, all these will act as instruments to make education — knowledge—universal. There is no doubt that we have very good brains in India. Our students do so well when they go abroad. The scenario will change. The reverse process has already started. Opening up of more opportunities in India will bring back many of those who went abroad.

KS But do you think the nature of education largely imparted in our country will change?

BR Yes, because today there is a desire for scientific education. Even Information Technology is after all a science. The emphasis on liberal arts has gone down. The enthusiasm for commerce may also abate in years to come. Basically, it will have to be a mix of liberal arts and technical education.

KS Is there anything more you would like to comment upon?

BR Yes, I must say that the teacher-student relationship has undergone a major change. Neither the teachers nor the students have the same relationship which we used to have.

Students looked up to their teachers and teachers, too, had a real affection for their students. It was a highly personalized relationship. Those days, teachers not only did their teaching but also influenced lives. In my case, this is true. Those teachers were a class apart. After all, C.F. Andrews was the Principal of St. Stephen's College for some time. Then, I remember Mr. Lee, a man who voluntarily resigned from I.C.S. only because he wanted to teach. He also coached us in cricket. One day he got very angry with a boy and delivered him a mild kick. It was nothing very much but the following day he publicly apologized to the boy during assembly in front of all the teachers and students. These things do not happen now-a-days. At least I don't see them though there must be still such people and instances. Dashrath Ojha was another such teacher and so was Raja Ram who later became Principal of St. Stephen's College. And then there was N.V. Thadani who did so much for Hindu College; he was also a great scholar.

KS What do you see as the future of Hindu College in particular?

BR It is a fine college with a very high reputation. And I am sure it will maintain its reputation and remain one of the leading colleges of the country. It should be the effort of the teachers and management to see how we can bring back some values in life at a time when such values are fast declining in the country. It is not easy but we must strive!

Kavita A. Sharma*

Thirty-three years ago I entered Hindu College as an undergraduate student. What is remarkable is that I was allowed to join 2nd Year English (Honours) directly although I had done the Pre-Medical course earlier. At that time there were only eleven years of schooling as opposed to twelve years now, followed by a three year B.A. Course. Pre-Medical or Intermediate Science was done by those wanting to join the medical profession. The system was flexible enough to enable Mr. P.C. Sood, who was at that time the permanent Head of the Department of English unlike the present rotational Teacher-in-charge, to give me admission without any eyebrow raising in the Staff Council. My case presents a vivid contrast to the hawkish fight over every rule that is seen today and the intense scrutiny to which every admission is subjected. I was glad to be able to vindicate Mr. Sood's faith in me by covering the three year course in two years and doing remarkably well.

There were fourteen hundred students in the college at that time, it having grown from about seven hundred in the 1950s. We became an extended college in 1989 and the number rose to about 2100 bringing financial gain but making management more challenging. During my student days there were no girls in B.A. Pass and B.Sc. General courses. My own batch consisted of a grand eleven with only two girls. Most of our spare time was spent in the girls' common room, which was a fairly popular place, or in the library. The presence of a teacher in the corridor was enough to send us into our classrooms and our Principal, Dr. B.M. Bhatia, was ever on the prowl to catch a straying student. On winter mornings he could be seen sitting in the lawns in the front, reading his files and transacting other official business. There were no grilled barricades and access to the corridors was unimpeded. The

**Student in Hindu College, 1967-71, teacher in the Department of English, Hindu College since 1971. Principal of the College since 1998.*

presence of police on the campus was such a rare phenomenon that if it was ever required it made it to the national newspapers.

We were ardent devotees of the classroom. We hardly ever missed a class and mass bunking was unheard of. If, on some rare occasion, we did absent ourselves, we were overcome by such strong pangs of guilt that it wasn't worth the exercise. Subsidiary classes were held from two in the afternoon when teaching of our main subjects was over. Even they were miraculously overflowing. We had in any case nowhere else to go. There were hardly any cars or motorbikes on the campus and no University Specials were available before 3.30 in the afternoon. Even students admitted under the Sports Category had to attend classes in the morning and report for practice on the field at 2.30 p.m.

Those were the heady days of a strong Hindu cricket team rivalling the equally strong St. Stephen's cricket team. The two giants usually met in the finals and this was a major annual event. Almost the entire university population turned out to cheer their favourites. Remember there was no South Campus at that time. It was established only in 1973-74 and its first office was at South Extension.

We also had good table tennis, lawn tennis and swimming teams. The present seminar room used to be the T.T. (Table Tennis) Room. Swimming team members went for swimming practice to the Model School near Rajinder Service Station and to the National Sports Club, which was a popular evening practice venue for other teams too. The Sports Complex was built as late as 1986, the funds for it being raised entirely by the old students of the College through donations.

The recent fire in the auditorium in which the structure was mercifully saved, took me back to '67 when the burnt remains of the hall (which had been destroyed by fire due to short circuiting in 1966) consisting of a floor and a few columns lent a touch of romantic antiquity to the College. The present auditorium was constructed in 1970 at a cost of approximately sixteen lakhs. Fifty percent of the grant came from the U.G.C. Students actively participated in raising the rest through public donations, selling booklets and organising programmes

such as a recital of Subbulakshmi's music. The then Prime Minister of the College, Anil P. Vijay played a pivotal role in fund raising by not only enlisting the help of students, but also by leading them to U.G.C. to pressurise it into allocating and releasing funds for construction. Dr. Sarup Singh, the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Delhi University at that time, and an alumni of Hindu College exerted his influence and lent a helping hand.

Another striking change that has taken place is in the role that the library played in our lives. There was no easy availability of photocopiers and we had to painstakingly make our own notes. Hence, the library was the pivot of our lives. It remained open till 9.00 p.m. including on Saturdays. The reserve section was always so full that there was competition for space. The little rooms on the side were kept clean and functional. They were actively used by students for animated group discussions. We wrote tutorials very seriously and discussed them with great enthusiasm and fervour.

Cultural programmes took place the year round and truly reflected college talent. No professionals came from outside and the expenses were small. MECCA envisaged as an activity-week came into being only in 1973. Gradually, it became a mega spectacle with increased outlay, large sponsorships and professionals joining the fray. Somewhere along the line it became more of a commercial enterprise than a cultural one and lost its innocence.

The hostel was presided over by a mild-mannered Mr. Vishwanath from the Department of English before Dr. Grover took over. A normal practice up to the time of Mr. Vishwanath was that a bell was rung in the hostel every night at 10 p.m. and a roll call was taken, something that I am told continues till today at St. Stephen's. It probably imparts a sense of discipline even if only in symbolic terms.

I joined the staff of Hindu College in July '71 after completing my MA in April of the same year—a situation that would be the envy of many today. Before me, there was only one other lady on the faculty, Mrs. Satya Rai in the Department of Political Science, out of a faculty strength of about eighty. The staff room was located in what is presently the office of the Administrative Officer. Room numbers 9 and 10 were joined and modified to create the present staff room

in 1986-87. Room No.9 belonged to the Department of Economics and large subsidiary classes, like Compulsory English, were held in Room No.11.

Times have changed. There is growth in the numbers of students accompanied by a general sparseness of attendance in classes, a radical reduction in the role of the library, and a decrease in the commitment to the institution. Higher education has expanded too rapidly and unevenly in post-independence India for it to aspire to quality and excellence. Largely outmoded and uninteresting syllabi, the faltering examination system, lack of innovative teaching methods, the over-emphasis on certification rather than on actual learning or skill development, the divorce between the university and the workaday world, are some of the factors that have marginalized higher education. The positives are that students are brighter, more aware, career conscious and competitive. With increasing integration into the world economy, expansion of communication and information technology, rapid transportation which has made the world a global neighbourhood, rise in expectations and impatience with traditional obstacles, change is bound to occur. But it has to come from within. The system itself will be compelled to react or respond sooner or later to right the balance. Continuity and change, change and continuity—this is deeply ingrained in the Indian psyche. Its genius lies in its capacity to absorb, adapt, assimilate and integrate. Education, too, will have to shake its torpor and transform itself so that it becomes sensitive to the changing demands made on it.

Anil Shorey*

A century ago, on first of May
A Prime institution was formed.
Hindu College, our elders say,
Took Delhi City by storm.

Shri Krishan Dass Gurwala
Was founding father proud.
Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya
Opened it to the crowd.

At Chandni Chowk and then 'Kash Gate'
The College excelled indeed,
At north campus since fifth decade
It remains simply top seed.

An active role in National Freedom
Showed patriotism of students too.
At Gandhiji's call for Quit India Movement
The College closed in '42'.

In academics and sports always prime,
In debates Hindu does well,
With an ambience forever sublime,
In cricket it always excels.

Mookherji Roy, Adhikari and Sen
Were skippers of yesteryears,
Thadani, SK Sen, Bhattacharya were men
Towards a steady course did steer.

**Student in Hindu College, 1967-70*

Mathur and Bhatia did elan provide
While Verma and Maheshwari were guides,
Kavita Sharma-our 'First Lady' with drive,
Now steers the Flagships with pride.

Shri Ram and now Dr. Bharat Ram
Do the nation proud
To Hindu's hon'ble Chairman
'Three Cheers' we say aloud.

Unforgettable Prof. Prem Chand
Was father of College Parliament
Birla, TK Kaul and Sarup Singh
Are others to complement.

Hinduites in all walks of life
Succeed everywhere,
In defence, police, administration alike,
Top leaders are always there.

Politics, films and medicine,
Are also represented well.
To education, scribes and businessman,
Success has always dwelled.

A hundred years of Hindu College
Are soaked with legends a-true
Such institutions in our age,
Are really extremely few.

The College, dear alumni mates,
Is indeed truly sublime,
Its deeds shall leave their prints
On scrolls of the sands of time.

With love, faith and loyalty
The College wants nothing more,
It has and will bring royalty,
And we love her to our core.

Vinay Lamba*

I owe whatever success I have achieved in the field of cricket and in my career with Dena Bank, spanning more than twenty seven years, to my alma mater Hindu College which has taught me discipline, dedication, determination and team spirit. The College has taught me to handle all types of situations on and off the field which is proving very useful in my career as well as in life generally.

It was while I was attending All India Schools Cricket Coaching Camp at Hyderabad when I got the news that my admission to Hindu College was finalised. The first day in the College is very well embedded in my memory, when I entered the gate with a very close friend Hari Om Puri; the then College Cricket Captain and a celebrity. The earlier success in school cricket on national level had instilled a feeling of over confidence which was quite natural at that particular age.

On entering the premises, the first house on the right side of the main entrance was that of our respected Physical Director Soni Sahib, a veteran of the College. Hari Om introduced me to Soni Sahib and I was expecting some flattering words when the great man put me in my place by saying straight away in Punjabi that if any complaint of any sort was received against me I would be simply thrown out of the cricket team and I must remember that I would be a big zero if not allowed to play the game. In a flash he had brought me back to earth! Soni Sahib was a very disciplined person and known for his regular and perpetual presence on the field to see that all sports persons were in the field on time and no one ever missed any training session. Be it hot summer, heavy rains or chilly winds he would be on the bicycle along with us to ensure that we jogged 4-5 km everyday. He paid personal attention to our exercise and training sessions. Perseverance,

**Student in Hindu College, 1967-1970.*

diligence and punctuality were a few traits that got ingrained in our souls under his guidance & support. His contribution has been really great in moulding our character and making us strong mentally and physically. I along with my compatriots owe him a lot and salute his great soul.

My admission was in B.Com. Honours Course. Being a non-commerce student in school I was handicapped in not knowing the basics of the subject. Further my preoccupation with cricket, such as representing the Delhi State in Ranji Trophy, North Zone in Duleep Trophy, and also very regular College cricket ensured that I missed a lot of classes.

All professors in the department understood my predicament, co-operated by showing consideration, and helped whenever required. It is not fair to single out any one name whether it is Dr. Grover, Dr. Govind Prasad, Dr. Anil Kumar, Dr. Misra or Dr. Gulshan. The name of respected Ashok Mittal will, however, always remain embedded in my memory. Dr. Mittal being a great sports fan, would come to my house all the way from Lucknow Road before and also during the examination days to guide me. It was that 'Guru-Shishya' relationship that sowed the seeds of respect for this great man in my heart.

We cricketers, then, were a closed homogenous community and helped other sports persons, and having special status, were helped by everybody in the College. Another name which needs special mention is that of Shri S.P. Chauhan popularly known as "Babuji". Mr. Chauhan was a great sports fan and would go out of his way to do anything to help a sportsperson. He always ensured that I did not have any problem of any sort and for him I have been among the best batsmen in the country. Thanks, Babuji.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank each and everyone of you associated with my foundation years at Hindu College, for contributing those bits that helped me become what I am today.

I owe it all to you.

N. Balachandran*

The late sixties and early seventies were very momentous ones for Delhi University. It was caught up in a wave of political ferment as never before. 'Che', a play directed by Kapil Sibal, projected the larger than life image of the legendary Cuban revolutionary and found echoes in the hearts and minds of many impressionable young men and women who either left to fight in the village of Naxalbari or stayed behind to test the waters before taking the leap.

Whether it was flirtation, a deep infatuation or even a lifelong commitment, radical ideas found expression in many. Those who flirted with the ideology became well-known Coffee House intellectuals and future civil servants (my lips are sealed) while those who suffered a brief but intense infatuation found themselves ill-suited to meet police bullets in killing fields and returned tamely to become lecturers, businessmen and even a police officer (again, my lips are sealed).

Like the Cambridge intellectual of the twenties, many intelligent young men liked the egalitarianism and community feeling of belonging to an international revolutionary movement. With them, the ideology took deep roots and whatever it is that they do today, in their heart of hearts they remain committed socialists. Many promising students of Hindu Collogue were impressed by the dialectic of teachers like Prof. Randhir Singh (in the Political Science faculty), Dr. Bipan Chandra (in History) and Dr. K. N. Raj and Dr. Tapan Roy Chowdhury in Political Economy. Indeed, even Dr. Amartya Sen had his admirers, though none of them founded a fellowship or gathered a large following.

As College went, Hindu was never in the forefront of any political activity. Bright sparks like Chand Joshi questioned

**Student in Hindu College, 1968-72*

the foundations of bourgeois complacency but the socio-economic origins of most of the students did not encourage great radicalism. The race of life did not look so serious but most Hindu College students were aware of the dangers of dilettantism. A police record would debar a candidate from selection into the civil services or landing a job with a good firm. Thus, it was all right to quote Kant and Goethe, Marx and Rousseau, especially for the punch lines in the debates but woe betide anyone who took those ideas too seriously. If all life is a stage, leftist ideas were the day's makeup that came off in the quiet hours of the evening, in the privacy of one's home.

Delhi University itself never recovered from the masterly stroke of JNU's creation. It was darkly muttered in those days that Jawaharlal Nehru University was set up to provide a safety valve for political ferment of Delhi University. Whatever may have been the reason for its creation, JNU certainly pulled away the academic heavyweights. Dialectic thinkers of the social sciences suddenly found themselves part of the establishment rather than uneasy invitees to the party. Enormous funds and facilities, not to mention foreign fellowships and sabbaticals, stilled the voices of dissent more convincingly than any police action could.

Hindu College itself was never the same again. Virtually the entire cream of the History Department left for the rocky campus of the newly created university. What remained was the old school, strong on dates and names, weak on analysis and ideologies; steady and unflinching in the belief that history was a study of heroes and the millions who were ruled by them. Napoleon fascinated these teachers, not merely because he was a Corsican and barely five feet tall, but because he conquered vast areas and had a heroic halo around all his action. Was he the child of Revolution? Without proper analytical tools, these well-meaning teachers could not interpret social and political movements though they carefully catalogued them and posted for posterity every blow struck by the French soldier against his Austrian adversary.

University life is like premarital flings, where students can flirt with charming damsels, drugs and even so called seditious ideologies. Like Hyde Park in London, anything

spoken within the confines of Maurice Nagar was taken as an expression of academic enquiry and philosophic discussion. Pamphlets could be printed, even distributed, and some positive action like strikes and boycott of classes was undertaken. But all this was confined to the physical limits of the University where the police did not normally enter. Immunity from prosecution did not extend to stopping buses or stoning them near affiliated colleges outside the campus. Also, like all young men who quietly accept the bride chosen by their parents, the graduating student shed his disheveled look for a more conservative dress order which interview boards would prefer. Fast fading memories of demonstrations outside the U.S. Embassy and smoking 'pot' are put firmly behind in that transitory phase called "joining the establishment".

We have all heard of infidelity after marriage. So too, when an old flame meets us many years later, accidentally or deliberately, memories are revived and one thing leads to another. Thus, leftist ideas or a radical ideology fascinates some people after they have publicly abandoned them. Even if they do not admit it, they are more egalitarian and less sectarian than their classmates, more apt to be kind to a worker and less inclined to accept the 5-star culture. Ultimately, perhaps, it has something to do with one's conscience, which can be stilled in most cases but not all. Poverty and suffering, denial of rights and rightful dues, touch us all in some way, mostly in a superficial manner. We are concerned but do not translate this concern into concrete action. Those who stand up for justice and on behalf of the weak and dispossessed are those whose conscience refuse to quiet down. As Jesus Christ spoke of his followers, ye are the salt of the earth and if the salt hath lost its flavour, of what use is it? These few old collegians, who speak up for the disadvantaged, make us feel better about ourselves.

Ranjan Chatterjee*

Impressions of college days after a gap of thirty years bring back memories, which are deeply etched on one's mind. 1969 July, I set foot into the portals of Hindu College. Man set foot on the moon that very year. It was not merely a scientific feat, rather it was an assertion of man's ability to break the myths and essay forward into hitherto uncharted areas.

Fresh from school, the freedom to sport casual wear other than uniform, the option to amble across to the Coffee house or to spend hours watching our doted cricket team practice on the nets redefined freedom to me. Coming out of the cloistered atmosphere of the school, all this was the grounding for self-discipline, in place of discipline hitherto imposed from outside.

Being a day-scholar one always tended to be at a disadvantage compared to hostlers who, thanks to the rigorous ragging, were perceived as more mature. My travails with ragging were intermittent and would emanate from the most unexpected quarters. Once I had the occasion of being ragged by a bevy of most innocuous looking girls who asked me among numerous tricks to climb up to the top of the iron gate and then jump. Half way up the grill, my drainpipe trousers betrayed me. It was embarrassing all right, but it mercifully saved my bones. On another occasion, as a punishment for not being able to sing publicly, I was locked up in a ladies toilet and had to sing from inside, so loud that seniors outside could hear. I used the door as my "tabla". Luckily, the hinge did not give way. Clearly, our founding fathers must have had the foresight to anticipate such diverse uses of a toilet. From within the walls of College, one learns lessons to withstand a lot of pulls and pressure in life.

In the second year when I tried to rag the 'freshers', repeated efforts bore no fruits. On the first occasion, I ordered

**Student in Hindu College, 1969-72*

a boy whom I had seen for the first time to fetch book from the racks. It turned out to be a fiasco because he was a third year science student who was rarely required to come to college. The second time, I asked a young lady fresher all immaculately dressed in white as to when she became a widow. Quick came the response – the day you died. I was beside myself with chagrin at my total failure in equalizing the quantum of ragging received a year earlier. Having burnt my fingers, I decided never to try it again.

'University Specials' were a small compensation available to the day-scholars. The D.T.C. buses gave the students the opportunity to travel anywhere in Delhi for a paltry sum of Rs. twelve and fifty paise per month. Years later while studying at the London School of Economics, I argued, tongue in cheek, that there was no inflation in India; and that D.T.C. still charges students Rs. twelve and fifty paise per month. Who says we don't stick to glorious traditions?

With wonder-struck eyes, I saw many students had mastered the fine art of dodging the conductor even when they did not have the ticket. Finally, one day not wanting to be left behind, I tried similar tricks and the conductor told me that my face was too transparent to befool him. That put a painful end to my boisterous frivolity.

In the early 1970s, leftist political ideologies were the in thing in college. It was incongruous to sip coffee without being able to explain Hegelian dialectics upside down. I pored over these literatures after having acquired them for a song from the steps of the old coffeehouse (now Palika Bazaar), procured a kurta, a satchel and sported a goatee beard. Still, I felt, something was amiss. My introspection led me to the inference that I desperately needed a girlfriend to enhance my status in College. Frantic efforts to locate a suitable young lady led to near disastrous consequences. I was in second year and even though I used to participate in College athletics and did make a couple of feeble points in the Hairsplitters' Club, girls, who were my contemporaries, possibly knew more about me and I could not find any lady in either second or first year willing to tag along with me. This led to considerable anxiety till I spotted a girl who was a year senior and studying

English Literature. We soon discovered that the quality of mercy is indeed twice blessed. It blessed her because I used to carry her books with great pride and chaperon her to the bus stop. It blessed me as well for it meant an end to my long quest. My customary swagger increased and the two of us used to saunter from one coffeehouse to another with great enthusiasm. We used to spend hours on end in the lawns overlooking the college ruminating over sandwiches the past, the present and the pregnant future. Around spring just when the fresh leaves came and the flowers were in bloom, I realised that Karl Marx and Engels figured less in our conversation. Love, the many-splendoured thing, must have been doing its trick stealthily. Being a Bengali as part of my credentials, I used to boast of singing Rabindra Sangeet. My friend, at an emotional point one afternoon, asked me to sing to her. I immediately took off on a full-throated rendition. After that she burst out laughing and complemented me for being a good sport. I was so slighted that since then I have never sung before anyone.

The rest of the impressions is boring prose, not poetry. I was summoned by the tutor and warned in those very sentimental lawns that my attendance was borderline and unless I wished to stay on in the same class in the next year, I better pull up my socks. Hindu College, at my time, was very fond of its cricketers. It never felt like letting them pass off in time, for it signaled disaster in our encounter with the College across the road, whom as we lustily cheered "Played just for practice". Somehow, my indulgent parents on seeing my pocket expenses shooting up saw through my game. My lady friend got busy with her exams and later, while doing her post graduation, thought it infra-dig to walk by my side. The pleasant morning dew of my life had evaporated under the scorching sun. My goatee beard disappeared, the swagger was perforce not there and the kurta had to be shelved along with Marx and Hegel.

Third year at College meant turning over a new leaf. Through an open competition, I became editor of Indraprastha, the college magazine. Thanks to the drubbing that I received from home and bitten by the fact that I was ditched by my

lady friend, I scored the highest marks in the College and the University as a whole. The College gave a scholarship. It took me time to register that I was finding a new recognition in Hindu College. Since then one hasn't looked back.

Over the last thirty years, one has hurtled through life and has taken steps, some sure, some tentative. It has been a long essay of experiences, initially as a lecturer in Sri Venkateshwara College and then in the Indian Administrative Service. Many of the associations formed in college with Principal B. M. Bhatia, with Professor Nand Lal, Harish Khare and R. P. Kaushik to name a few, have been lifelong. Unfortunately, I have lost track of my lady friend and do not know whether the same chemistry will work if we were to meet again. After all love is a many-splendoured thing, especially the first love.

Even now, when I am alone, in a pensive mood, the lush green lawns, the old iron benches beneath the dwarf trees overlooking the sombre college building affords an ideal setting for the thought process to develop. What better tribute can one give to his alma mater? HINDU COLLEGE, I salute thee.

Raj Kumar Oberoi*

When you sit down to pen reminiscences of your college days, you find it difficult to decide where you should start recollecting the events of that golden period, and are left with no other option but to go back to the end of school life and the beginning of college life.

I joined the college in May 1969 and spent five eventful years at the campus. Friendships and contacts established in those five years have lasted a life time. Everyone has left for different walks of life and when we meet at any point of life, the nostalgic reference of the college days comes back in front of us.

The impact of certain teachers like Prof. Prem Chand, Dr. Satya M. Rai, Dr. B.M. Bhatia, Dr. Ashok K. Mittal, Mr. K.K. Mishra, Dr. N.N. Aggarwal, Mr. V.M. Mishra and Dr. R.S. Rawat and various others with whom I was directly/indirectly associated left a considerable and lasting mark on my personality.

The College Parliament was a forum for discussion of academic and other issues and was an excellent training ground for public speaking and leadership. All students and teachers of the college are its members and elect a Prime Minister from among themselves. To be the Prime Minister of the Hindu College Parliament is a great honour for any student even today.

On the election day in 1973, it was raining heavily and the turnout was very poor. Mr. Sanjay Srivastava, a hosteler, got elected by a slender margin. But the Parliament session changed the scenario. The person elected lost the confidence of the House on the Budget. As a result I was elected Prime Minister of the college in 1973-74.

I take pride in the fact that Prof. Prem Chand was the Speaker when I was elected Prime Minister in 1973-74 and the

*Student in Hindu College, 1969-74.

Platinum Jubilee of the college coincided with my Prime Ministership. Prof. Sarup Singh, Vice Chancellor, was the Chief Guest and Dr. Bharat Ram, Chairman, Governing Body, presided over the function. A tradition worth remembering is that of the P.M. planting a sapling in the College on the Founders Day. A sapling planted by me twenty five years ago has today grown into a mighty tree.

I will always remember my tenure of office as Prime Minister of the College Parliament for more reasons than one. The Mecca Festival, in which colleges from all over India participate, was started in 1974 by us and is annually organised till date.

But I shall fail in my duty, if I do not pay my tribute to a person who has most influenced my life. It was none other than Prof. Prem Chand. A master orator himself, he guided many of us in developing the art and craft of public speaking. His diction and style inspired many budding speakers. He conducted the sessions of Parliament with dignity and devotion. There used to be pin-drop silence as he entered the house for Parliament session. He was an institution in himself.

I would like to quote the following couplet of Mohd. Iqbal:

*Khudi ko kar buland itna
ke har taqdeer se pehle
khuda bande se khud puchhe
bataa teri raza kya hai*

These words provide the foundation for the quality of determination which Prof. Prem Chand developed in his life.

The annual cricket match between Hindu & St. Stephen's used to be more popular than any test match. Students from almost all the colleges used to come to the university ground to cheer up the teams. The traditional rivalry with the college across the road was a healthy rivalry whether in the field of sports or debating. Today, I don't know whether the tradition is maintained or not.

The college has completed 100 years of service for the promotion of education. The college which I visit after thirty years is not the same. The familiar faces have either retired or

left. The institution is there but the glorious traditions are missing. But I remember my association with the university as elected member of the University Court/Executive Council which still kept me involved with the activities of the College. I fervently pray that my Alma Matar grow from strength to strength in the new millennium.

Kumar Rajesh*

Proper education does not merely mean acquiring degrees – like B.A., M.A. etc. It should develop the overall personality of a person, which in turn, goes on to help him/her in embarking upon future profession. Based on my own experience, I can happily note that Hindu College has proved to be next to none in providing proper education in this sense.

Two things are of crucial importance in journalism – the “story ideas” and meeting the “deadlines”. I repeat – ideas and deadlines. In retrospect, I realise that it was my B.A days in Hindu College, which helped me prepare myself properly for both these aspects in particular, and journalism in general.

Before proceeding further it will be relevant to point out that getting entry into Hindu College Hostel helped. I could get the hostel only in my second year of graduation based on the result of my first year. I finished my B.A. (H) Political Science between 1985-88. Then went on to do my M.A. Political Science during 1988-90.

One fine afternoon, in the autumn of 1986 during my siesta in Room No.24 of Hindu Hostel I had this idea of doing a set of interviews for our Annual College Magazine, INDRAPRASTHA. For this story I interviewed L. K. Advani, from the BJP, Madhu Dandavate from the Janta Party and Late Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna of the Lok Dal. It was the time when Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister with a convincing majority of over four hundred M.Ps in the Lok Sabha. As such, the dynamic face of Rajiv Gandhi, his “liberal” government and his Congress Party perpetually hogged the headlines in most of newspapers. My idea was to enlist the opinion of the major opposition parties on the major issues facing the country then – like brewing terrorism in Punjab, rural and caste violence in Bihar etc. The then Principal and Ex-officio publisher, Mr. P. C. Verma, was not very positive or

**Student in Hindu College, 1985-90*

enthusiastic about such a volatile political story, specially reflecting non-congress views, for our College Magazine. Yet it was the persistent efforts of the Magazine Manager of Hindu College Mr. Rajesh Menon, and a senior member of the Editorial Board, Mr. Ravikant Sharma, that finally the story was through. Thirteen years later, Mr. L. K. Advani, the present Home Minister, told me the other day at the BJP headquarters, Delhi, that it was the first and the last time that he had given an interview for a College magazine. Incidentally, Mr. Advani's daughter, Pratibha, was a "fresher" in Hindu College in 1986-87. So that marks the beginning of my journey in journalism.

Next year in 1987-88, I was elected the magazine manager of Hindu College. If I may be allowed to throw my modesty in the dustbin for a little while, may I please inform the readers what Dr. Sarabhai of Chemistry Deptt., and In-charge of conducting elections in our college, told me upon being elected the "Mago Man"? I was elected for the post by the highest margin ever recorded in the history of Hindu College. Not bad! Right!

While performing my duties as the magazine manager I gained valuable experience that prepared me for my future career as journalist. As the magazine manager I was expected to be the overall incharge of publication of the two college magazines – INDRAPRASTHA, the annual magazine and WINDOW, the quarterly one. It involved everything from A to Z – right from nominating the members to the Editorial Board to generating and implementing new ideas, down to the lay out and even the proof reading, if needed. I learnt my lesson for life about meeting deadlines. My father visited me in my hostel during February –March 1988 and to his utter dismay he found me busy giving final touches to the college magazines rather than preparing for my final examinations. And it showed in my final results. However, much to the pleasure of my parents, the training shows in my career as a T.V. journalist.

It may also be pertinent to note here that it was again a Hinduite whom I had met during my MA days who helped me get my first job in November 1992. Her name is Shruti Prasad. Between 1990-92, I had finished my M.Phil from the

Centre for Political Science in J.N.U. During a telephonic conversation Shruti told me on 26th November 1992 that why didn't I drop my C.V at T.V Today's office for a job with NEWSTRACK, India's first T.V News Magazine. Believe it or not, the next day on 27th November 1992 Ms Madhu Trehan, the Executive Producer of N' TRACK, was insisting that I join them on 1st December. And I did. In a way even that I owe to Hindu College.

Knowing the big and the famous helps. More so in journalism. Again during my B.A. (H) days in Hindu College I had the opportunity of meeting and knowing quite a few persons who are presently the leading lights of the country in their respective spheres – Roshan Abbas, the famous T.V personality; Ashish Vidyarthi, the fresh big "bad" guy of Bollywood; Adarsh Srivastava, the music director of "Machis" fame; Arjun Ramphal, the top shot model; and Ajay Bijli, the dynamic businessman and owner of Priya Cinema in Delhi, to name a few. I may be very familiar with Roshan, but not so familiar with the rest, but the point is that studying in Hindu College helped. Then, add to it the endless list of civil servants – who were my friends or batchmates in Hindu, and one suddenly feels oneself among the most well-connected persons in the country. I am happy to note that my two younger brothers – Capt. Kumar Shailesh and A.C.P. Kumar Gynesh (Delhi Police 1997 batch) – who also passed out from Hindu College, are part of that list.

Many more acquaintances that I made as a student of Hindu College may not be as famous and known, but their memories are equally precious to me, if not more.

Hence, to a very great extent I owe my career in journalism to my association with Hindu College. Hindu College I salute you!

J. K. Anand*

Indraprastha, the house magazine of Hindu College, Delhi, started its publication in the year 1916. Originally the Journal was intended to be published as a quarterly publication, with four issues in January, April, June and December. Till 1940 it continued as a quarterly journal. The earlier issues of the Magazine display the Registration Number of the Journal as L 3015. Since the year 1949-50, the Magazine has been brought out as an annual publication.

It is interesting to know that initially the Indraprastha was contemplated to be a priced publication. Earlier issues of the magazine mention its annual subscription as Rs.2/-. A single copy of the magazine was priced at Annas Twelve. The various issues of the magazine also used to contain a sufficient number of advertisements from local business firms and the shops selling books and stationery etc. around the College, which was at that time situated at Kashmere Gate. Occasionally, the magazine also contained well-written book reviews of the latest published books, which were of special interest to students and teachers. A still more fascinating fact worth mentioning is that the magazine, in its olden days, was truly a multi-lingual publication containing five vernacular sections i.e. English, Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi and the Urdu sections. At present it generally contains three sections, viz. English, Hindi and Sanskrit.

It may be equally interesting to know that the cover designs of the journal have undergone frequent changes. The issue of the Indraprastha dated February 1931, which is one of the earliest issues of the magazine available at present, shows 'Bharat Mata' standing within a map of India. Two lions flank her. The words 'Vande Matram' are inscribed in the middle. On the cover of the issue of the journal brought out in November 1932, a logo of Hindu College has been printed

*Currently Librarian, Hindu College.

which shows 'a rising sun' and a lotus flower. The words 'Music of Truth' are inscribed in the logo and the bold alphabets 'H C D' are written below the logo. On the cover of the issue of February 1935, the College logo is retained but the letters 'H C D' are omitted. The same cover design has been repeated in almost all the issues till late 1960s. Later on it has been observed that the College logo has been omitted from the cover of the journal and that the cover designs of all the issues are different every year.

It may be equally fascinating to know that the issues of the Indraprastha in 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were virtually a treasure-trove of a wide range of high quality articles, stories and poems authored both by the teachers and students. Another significant fact, which must be highlighted about the magazine brought out in those days, was that its issues contained a detailed account of the activities of various student bodies in the College such as the Literary Union, Punjabi Literary Union, Political Science Seminar, the Sanskrit Parishad, the Fine Arts Society, the Historical Society, The Sangeet Sabha, Bengali Literary Association, Bazm-E-Adab, Students Aid Fund, Social Service League and NCC etc. The important regular features of the Indraprastha in the present time include: editorial, annual report by the College Principal, articles, stories, and poems, as well as activities of the College Parliament and Sports events. The number of photographs appearing in the various issues of the magazine has increased compared to earlier years.

The house magazine of a college, along with its other useful functions, also performs the role of faithfully recording the events that occur in the life of the institution. The most memorable event in the history of the College that was reported in the magazine was the visit of Mahatma Gandhi to the College in February 1931 and the speech delivered by him. Other important events in the history of the College which have been reported in the journal are the shifting of the College from Kashmere Gate to its present building in 1953, the Diamond Jubilee Year Celebrations in 1959 and the starting of the yearly 'Mecca Festival' in 1973. Some of the most absorbing articles that appeared in the various issues of the Indraprastha may be enumerated. They are 'Whither

Humanity' by Prof. Prem Chand (December, 1936), 'College through the years: 1899-1979' by Raj Kumar Oberoi (1978-79), 'The rise and fall of Hindu College Canteen' by Principal P. C. Verma.

The pages of the Indraprastha are also full of reminiscences by well-known Hinduities. There is a lot of sentiment in their reminiscences. Time and again the Hinduities say candidly and unmistakably that the few years that they spent in Hindu College were the most precious, most useful, most important and the happiest years of their lives. Some of the most interesting reminiscences may be enumerated. They are 'Hindu College (1900-05)' by Principal Phani Bhushan Adhikari (1951-52), 'In Defence of Hindu College' by An Old Hinduite (April 1958), 'As I look back' by Prem Chand (April 1959), 'Our College, Past and Present' by Shiv Raj Gupta (April 1960), 'Some reminiscences of my twenty-two years in Hindu College' by J. N. Kapur, 'Hindu College' by A. N. Puri, 'Hindu College in my days' by Kanwar Lal Sharma, 'Hindu College - things many do not know' by P. C. Sood, 'Hindu College in my time' by K. L. Madhok, 'College Auditorium: How it was built' by Principal B. M. Bhatia, 'Hindu College - my base camp' by Lalit Bhasin. All the aforesaid reminiscences are published in the issue dated 1983-84. Another most absorbing reminiscence is 'Such a long journey' by the present Principal Dr. Kavita A Sharma (1996-97).

On the occasion of the Centenary of Hindu College, a review of the College Magazine, Indraprastha, brings forth reminiscences... about some of the more outstanding personalities of yesteryears among both the students and the teachers, about some of the more memorable incidents that took place during the century left behind, about the image and the identity of the College as well as its 'atmosphere' and 'tone' in those times, about the role the College played in the various activities of the country. The review has emerged as anecdotal, analytical, nostalgic or irreverent, factual or evocative or perhaps all of these at the same time. It is a vivid and vital reminder of our past history and our inheritance, which is particularly apt and significant on the occasion of the Centenary.

Imtiaz Ali*

There is this wall in the College campus. You find it on the right as you enter the main gate. Pan Singh rests his back on this wall all of the business hours. I could never dig the purpose of this wall. It did not separate anything from anything. Because if you had to go to the Jai Singh lawn for tea, or for xeroxes, or even a meeting of the 'Frusto Samaj', there was always the opening on one side that you could pass through. Yes, girls who wore skirts and entered through the main gate could not clamber over the wall to get xeroxes. So they had to walk up to the pass, cross it, then walk back down to the machines. If they were in a hurry, this diversion would irritate them. But I don't really think that causing this kind of irritation was the sole target of constructing the wall. The guy must have had other reasons.

When asked to write an article about my reminiscences of the college, the first on my list was the auditorium. The sound of my shoes on the wooden stage, the musty smell as we entered to rehearse, the metal ladder to reach and adjust the lights. What could mean as much as the audi to me? Long innings have I played there as a director, as an actor, as the president of 'Ibtada' - the then Hindu College Dramatics Society. Also, I have received awards for topping the College in English Literature in the audi. Really, I should have written about the auditorium. I could write a heart-wrenching piece now that I've heard some buggers tried to burn it down a while back. But no, I am writing about the wall, just because I still wonder why, at all, it was built.

Long hours have I sat on the wall. For a phase, anyone coming in could be sure to see Pan Singh and me at the wall. The only difference between us was that my eyes would be constantly moving - receiving everyone at the gate and escorting her till as far as she could hold my fancy. Whereas

*Student in Hindu College, 1990-93.

Pan Singh took notice only of the people who came up to his box-shop. Rest of the times, he would look into the blur in front of his eyes and people could come and go as they pleased in the out-focus region.

The thought struck me that this movement of my eyes was all the difference there was between Pan Singh and me. I was interested, expectant. Pan Singh had seen all that life could show. Sitting on the wall, I realized that all that life was going to do to me is make me into Pan Singh. Now, if you have seen Pan Singh, you will realize that this wasn't really a gratifying thought. For no other reason but that the man was old. As old as you can get. So for a few months, there was a gnawing disturbance in my mind as I sat on the wall.

Our Principal had expressed pride over the college 'crowd' in the annual day speech. I had heard that if you woke up early and skipped the hostel breakfast and ran up to sit at the wall, you could see the 'crowd' pouring forth out of the U-specials and gushing in through the gate. The wall was the best position also to ridicule the across-the-street lily hearts as they pranced their confusing circles and who would wake secret nights mastering the correct pronunciation of 'Yves Saint Laurent' or 'Lambourghini'. What else about the wall? Yes, your teachers see you sitting on it and smoking as they came in. That is especially significant as I believe that Hindu College professors get easily impressed by a student who smokes. It was near the wall one day that a quivering Ms. Lalitha Subbu had shown me the reply note that Samuel Beckett had written her. Which she followed by reading out some of her poems. Another day I had dropped a stapler inside a girl's vest. I swear it was an accident. I was only trying to staple an election placard. Anyway, that day I learnt something about girls. That they like such things happening to them. Pan Singh was there that day too. But I'm sure that he did not notice.

It became an addiction. I would sit at the wall and look at people. Each would come in with a different song playing in the mind. Each body had a different tune. And the same person on different days would have different rhythms. Rigorous exercise of sitting on the wall and a new belief was

forming in my head. That I could discern people, approximate their thoughts. That, like most other college beliefs, fell by the wayside after a week or so. But all that gaping at people helps me today in my profession, I am a director, you see. I have to explain people to people. I couldn't have done that well if I hadn't sat on the wall.

Then one day, armed with my solid experience at the wall, I turned the glare of my vision on Pan Singh. I had been scared of looking at my inevitable future up till now. I was looking Pan Singh in the eye. Courage has its rewards, you see. That day at the wall, a final message drove into my head. That true as it was that my future could be nothing else, I had time to go. I had work to do, I had places to go, I had people to meet, I had 'promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep'.

From that day, I quit sitting at the wall. Initially, I avoided the front gate or walked past quickly to resist the temptation. But soon things eased out. In fact, I started to feel good passing the wall like anyone else, wondering what the wall thought was my song today, what was the tune of my body.

But as I walked past the wall while at College, or when I saw it in my trips to Delhi, or when I see it now in the sepia-toned section of permanent memory, I still have that one, only that one question ringing in my mind - why....? Why for heaven's sake was that goddam wall ever built?