

NDTF - A SATISFYING JOURNEY

It was on 16th July, 1965 that I joined Ramjas College. I had passed my M. Com. from Agra University and hence knew very few people in Delhi. It was on 9th July, 1965 that my interview was held at Ramjas College.. It was a very interesting experience since I had done my M.Com. from Agra University. I was a Ph.D. scholar and was a UGC fellow at that time and that helped me in my selection. Moreover, it was a matter of satisfaction that there were three other teachers from Agra University who were already teaching in Delhi University-Dr. R.K.Grover, (Hindu), Shri S.N.Goyal (SRCC) and Dr. B.P.Maheshwari (Shyam Lal).

I joined Ramjas College on the very first day of the session. When I joined Ramjas I was surprised to learn that Ramjas had B. Com.(Hons) course besides only three other colleges, in Delhi University- Shri Ram College of Commerce, Hindu College and Delhi College (now known as Zakir Hussain College). The other colleges having Commerce stream had B.A. Com Programme. B.Com. (Pass) was introduced in Delhi University in the beginning of 1970s. Hence, it was a challenge teaching in Ramjas at that time.

Further, we were five teachers in Commerce to handle all the papers of the B.Com. (Hons.) Course., Besides me, we had Prof P.K.Ghosh, Prof. B.P.Singh, Prof Mahesh Chandra and Shri S.C.Aggarwal. It was really a challenge, the five teachers were supposed to handle over a dozen papers. But it was an enjoying experience.

My first experience with DUTA elections was in 1969, after four years of my joining Delhi University, when Shri Rudder Duttji contested for DUTA President ship and won. At the request of my friend, Dr. R.K.Grover that I worked in that election and that is how I came in contact with Shri O.P.Kohli. That marked the beginning of my journey in NDTF.

Though NDTF came into existence some times either in late 1970s or beginning of 1980s, but it was in 1973 that I contested my first election to the DUTA Executive in the team of Shri O.P.Kohli. To my memory, we contested the election under the banner of University Forum. Five of us, Dr. G.R.Chopra (Shivaji), Dr. R.K.Seth (PGDAV), . S.P.Malhotra (Deshbandhu) and Dr. Y.K.Mehta(Deptt. of Operations Research) and my self contested and all five won very comfortably. Shri I.M.Kapahy (K.M. College) was not on our panel. He also won the election without any problem. I do not recollect any occasion that five of us contested under the same banner, presently known as NDTF and won.

It was after the elections to the DUTA Executive,that the process of election of other office bearers and co-option started. It is in that process that Mr. Kapahy became a part of all of us and was elected as the Secretary. Shri Devendra Kumar (Rajdhani College) was elected Vice President (Co-option Compulsion).. Dr. G.R.Chopra was elected as Joint Secretary and I was elected as 'Accidental' Treasurer since I was the only member with Commerce background. Dr. M.M.Sharma (Hindu college)

and Shri Prabhu Chawla (Swami Shradha Nand College) were those who worked hard to ensure smooth co-option and elections.

Attending the meetings of DUTA Executive Committee was a good training ground, since I had never come across a situation where the meetings lasted for hours together, some times late in the evening. In the initial few meetings I was acting only as an observer as a trainee, without much contribution. However, the leadership of Kohliji was a great motivational factor and proved to be a good learning experience.

The first big issue was faced at time of 1973 pay revision. Prof. Nurul Hassan was the Education Minister and the Third Pay Commission Recommendations were due but not announced. It was decided by DUTA to give a call for examination boycott in March 1975 and to make it successful the individual undertakings from about 2000 teachers were collected. This aspect was given huge publicity. And the Pay Commission was announced before the call for examination boycott was to materialise. The call for examination boycott was withdrawn. But I even today remember the principle of Shri Kohli-Keep a 'Threat' as a 'Threat' and never expose it. This dogma worked very well.

And then the black period of Internal Emergency completely made DUTA non functional. It was in 1977 that the elections for DUTA were again held and Shri Kohli was elected as the President. It was during this tenure that remarkable achievements were made-Medical Scheme, House Building Advance, Raising the number of elected A.C. members from 10 to 20 and getting two elected teacher representatives on the Executive Council of Delhi University. Shri Kohli was among the first two elected representatives on the Executive Council along with Dr. S.S.Rathi.

After this, it was a period when we did not win any DUTA President elections, though we have been winning elections to the Executive Council, Academic Council and DUTA Executive Committee. Before 1991, when I Contested the election for DUTA President ship, Mr. I.M.Kapahy Won Academic Council election (one Term) and Executive Council elections (Two Terms)-1985-89. It was in 1989 that I contested the Elections to the Executive Council and remained member for three years-it is during this period that we looked into another reorganization of Academic Council, the number of elected teacher representatives was raised from 20 to 26.

The year 1991 was a historic year in which I was made to contest the election for the President Ship of DUTA. In fact, I was put on the 'gallows.' It was a watershed election since I was made to contest against Ms. Kiran Walia, Laxmi Bai College), who was considered to be invincible. Mr. T.M. Thomas (Deshbandhu College) was the DTF candidate. But with the grace of God Almighty and the whole hearted support of the teachers of the University and NDTF cadre, I was able to defeat her by a margin of 265 votes. If I am not wrong, I am perhaps the only teacher in the

history of Delhi University, who was member of Executive Council and President of DUTA at the same time. I very vividly remember, while welcoming me in the Executive Council as President of DUTA, Prof. Upendra Baxi, who was the Vice Chancellor at that time, remarked "Since Dr. Kakkar is the President of DUTA now, we hope that there will not be any more problems." Thanking Prof. Baxi, I Made one simple remark "DUTA is a living organization, and like any other living organization, it will have its problems from time to time and when ever there are problems, you as Vice Chancellor will have to find solutions."

My term as the President of DUTA was eventful. It made me learn a lot and at the same time created a feeling in me to work for the cause of a common teacher. Soon after my assuming the responsibility of the President ship of DUTA that I came across a problem-UGC Amendment Bill was introduced in Rajya Sabha, which laid down the reprehensible provisions regarding the change in our working conditions. This made all of us worried and made us super active. I even today remember that some of us including Shri I.M.Kapahy, and Dr. S.S.Rathi went to JNU, Jamia Millia and IGNOU to mobilize support against the bill. It is in this process that Federation of Central University Teachers' Association (FEDCUTA) was formed. There were only 9 Central Universities in the country at that time. Prof. Jai Shekhar from JNU was its First President. With the advent FEDCUTA and the support of general teachers that we could ensure the withdrawal of the Bill from Rajya Sabha within three months.

But the other major issue related to the designation of Readers in the Colleges. The teachers in the colleges used to get the Readers Grade but not the designation, hence they used to be called as 'LIRG' (Lecturers in the Readers Grade). It was a major task, and with the positive approach of the then Vice Chancellor-Prof Upendra Baxi, all necessary formalities were completed i.e. Amendment of the relevant Ordinances, Holding the Selection Committees, etc. Though the process started some times in May-June, 1991, the task of designating all eligible teachers as Readers took nearly 2 years to complete. More than 4000 teachers were designated as Reader (there being only ONE rejection-the teacher did not want to be designated as Reader). It was a major break through achieved through the process of effective collective bargaining. Besides the changes introduced in the medical scheme, the effective operation of the Teachers Welfare Fund, the Revival of Teachers Grievance Committee, were some other achievements. The 1993 election was a fairly easy election and I defeated Dr. Ravi Chaturvedi (Zakir Hussain College) and Dr. Amar Deo Sharma (Delhi College of Arts and Commerce) with a much wider margin, nearly 1000 votes. The teachers rewarded me for the good work done during the first term.

It would not be out of place to mention that it was in late 1970s, early 1980s that the two teacher representatives were elected to the Executive Council of Delhi University, which continues till date and the number of elected teacher representatives on the Academic Council was raised from 10 to 20. Another effort was made in this regard and the number of elected teacher representatives was

raised from 20 to 26. And it remains 26 even till today. Since the process of amending Ordinances took some time, the elections to AC and EC were delayed and held in 1992, a year later.

I was on the Academic Council from 1983-87 and was elected to Executive Council in 1989, my term on EC continued till AC and EC elections were held in 1992. I had the opportunity of working with three Vice Chancellors- Prof Gur Bax Singh, Prof. Moonis Raza and Prof. Upendra Baxi. I had several opportunities to seek positions, but the NDTF and DUTA were uppermost in my mind. Without going in to the details of that situation, I remember a wherein Prof Baxi asked me whether 'he should resign' on a certain issue? I simply told him that it should be his own personal decision.

NDTF has been in my blood all through and I cherish this even today. Whatever reputation I gained in Delhi University has been only, and I repeat, only because of NDTF.

LONG LIVE NDTF.