

Graduate of 1947 and DU's heart of gold !

My memories of DU go back to the partition of our country in 1947 , when my family had to move from Lahore to Delhi . It's the untold story of how I passed my exams at Delhi University and I am making this confession after over 65 years !

I had left the beloved city of my birth , **Lahore** , with my elder brother and sister , escorted by an uncle and aunt . The train journey was a frightening one with people banging on the firmly - secured doors at every station . We had no choice but to travel light , with two spare sets of clothing apart from what we were wearing . There was no time to pack or even think about clothes . It all happened so suddenly .

We arrived in **Delhi** after months of having lived in fear in Lahore . Our parents were still in Lahore .

We relied on newspapers and radio to get information on the events that were consuming India .

We had left our education half way when we left Lahore .

The options at **Delhi University** were different for us dislocated students . I opted for **Indraprastha** College and filled up the necessary university forms , much against my wishes , for the offered subjects : History , Economics and English . I would have to start afresh as Economics was a whole new world for me as was history and studying with borrowed books ! It was not an easy time for me : just one week to go for exams , and the unceasing traffic of relatives who continued to arrive seeking shelter in our house , telling their personal tales of the difficult journey , a short distance made longer by the travails of madness that were prevalent at the time. It was an unnerving situation for the youngster I was , whose peace and happy childhood had been shattered by the political events which I couldn't understand . I had no confidence . Zero was my hope .

I had to appear for all the papers but kept my fears and reservations to myself . Keeping up pretences , I tried my best to help my mother in the kitchen to cope with cooking for so many people .

The day of my first exam arrived and I went to keep my date with destiny . The first exam was Economics and I opened the paper , shocked . It was unknown territory , my major subject in Lahore University had been Music...

Distraught with the fear of failure , I began to weep but I found strength within myself to consider how to tackle the situation in the best way possible . It struck me that I should write a letter to the examiner , a letter detailing the truth of our existence in this new city .

Respected Sir , I began... and I continued to share the entire story of our difficulties we , as a family , were undergoing as well as my personal issues over the unfamiliar subjects , shortage of funds to buy books , a very depressing home atmosphere , with relatives to console , an uncle lost and finally found in a refugee camp , sharing food and clothes and helping my mother and aunts in the kitchen to feed the large numbers of people who were pouring in . There was no time to focus on studying. I wrote a long letter to the examiner detailing every hardship we were faced with in those trying times . *Wrote very honestly* . I wrote the same letter for the other papers as well !

Some weeks later an advertisement in the paper stated that the **results were out** and would be posted at the respective colleges for students to check .

Sure of not finding my name on the board , I hesitated to get out of my bed , my quilt enveloping me in its comforting darkness from a bleak and unknown future , although the wrath of my parents and elder brothers was certain . My parents finally prevailed upon me to go to college for the results and to get more information to join the college from the next year .

My visit to the college was a different experience . *Hundreds* of students were standing in the spacious lawns of Indraprastha College , some smiling and others in distress .

A small group of us , unknown to each other shared our thoughts : the subjects were so different and the papers were very tough in comparison with those of Punjab University in Lahore . I was quiet throughout , wondering what the next move should be . Three students went towards the board and waited in the queue and came back after a few minutes . They were disappointed to find their names and roll numbers missing . *My heart sank even further.*

I made a hesitant move towards the queue , and suddenly I heard my name . I was on alert !

I requested the student standing in front to read out the names on the list and to my surprise , to my disbelief , *my name and roll number were listed !*

I wish I knew the gracious person who read my letters , understood my difficulties and helped me pass my exams . I always wanted to thank him / her personally and regret not having had the opportunity to do so !

Raj Suneja nee Kapoor
sent by her daughter Sunaina
The emphases is provided by the Edit Team .

That's DU for you !

It's worldclass , Studyclassy , culturally vibrant, of indomitable intellect... and with a heart of Pure Gold !!