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Diary from the cultural capital 1999-2003

Until early 90s, the Deans of the Faculty of Fine Arts, the M.S. University of Baroda were Professors as career academics and artists of repute apart from being good instructors and teachers. By that time, from the generation of teachers from the batch of 60s, a few had taken an early retirement and others had retired. Among teachers, the Gandhian ideas and Nehruvian institution builders had reached to a physical end of their educational mission. This resulted into a kind of academic vacuum seemed to be created by the lack of initiative and encouragement for the like minded talent to be trained as teachers. Teaching institutions cannot be sustained without well qualified teachers with requisite knowledge, ability and experience, unless those capable are nurtured, nourished and retained for a better future. The prospectus of the Faculty from 1999 onwards, mentions 15 vacant posts for teachers out of 33 listed positions, for an institution that had initiated first professional degree courses in Fine Arts at a University level in India. Painting and Graphics were better off with filled teaching posts, Applied Arts and Art History suffered from chronic shortage of teachers. Whereas, department of Sculpture was disaster in the making through a sense of complacency and Faculty politics of exercising influence and power by inadequate Heads of the Department and the Deans.

One can trace decline of quality in art education and rise of factionalism way back to early 80s. Much before economic liberalization of the 90s, teaching was the way for almost any good artist. Later, a growing public interest in contemporary Indian art offered opportunities to pursue a vocation as an artist. Sudden burst of interest made teaching appear a less appealing vocation. Those who were better off chose to work away from petty feuds and carry on traditions. Most public institutions cannot boast of being free from the kind of lethargy that could lead to eventual stagnation of a good thinking mind.

Art as an investment was becoming part of an emerging cultural identity in the times of economic liberalization and reforms in early 90s. For those in teaching art, it was a time for class as well as career advancement through an emerging interest which offered socialite mingling as well as establishment opportunities. By late 1993, the University appointed a Reader in Graphics (Printmaking) as an Officiating Dean, since there were no Professors available as Heads of the departments. Familiarity with art made way for friendly consultancy and advice. While seeking patronage, one could find clients. Hobnobbing with emerging connoisseurs was becoming an event in itself. However, to get to coordinate art camps seemed highly rewarding to exercise personal power and influence. In 1998, the Officiating Dean and In-charge Head of Sculpture had invited me to 'coordinate' and participate for one of the Sculpture Workshops. By the end of the happening, I had felt that there was a sense of loss because of meddling and manipulations by an insensitive facilitator as confided by several participants. Then, there was a temporary teacher from Sculpture to assist artists. Later on, he was appointed as a Lecturer in Sculpture. There were two other MA candidates for that interview. However, for not possessing an M.A. in Sculpture, he was appointed on a strictly conditional probation to clear an eligibility examination meant for University teachers (NET). Nonetheless, without minimum qualification of a Post Graduate Degree in the subject he still remains to be ineligible as per the University Grants Commission's norms in Higher Education as accepted by the M. S. University prior to his appointment.

Emerging connoisseurs were enthused about the know how of the art world like the 'top' artists, their signature tips and market values. Coffee table publications on artists were in the market for the first time. Old 'Artists' Camps' that still go on in the Lalit Kala Akademies from early 60s onwards were now known as Artists' Workshops. Emerging artists sought the privilege of being included among 'big names'. For the invited artists, the 'honorary' coordinator from the Fine Arts played a half-host as well as the role of a midwife of creativity. While promoting emerging talent some speculators from the local art school opened a kind of hunting ground for bargains as an investment. The buzz of activity has continued to provide opportunities of sale, service, consultancy and commissions for some faculty members. Initiative by an artist-couple as coordinators has set its own standards as the 'first-family' for many artists. Artists associated with Fine Arts, but residing outside had to rely upon familiarity of the 'coordinator'. Individual egos seemed to be nurtured beneath benign smiles and material mingling of growing interests. Liberalization of Indian economy had brought art and creativity together. Victors of vested interest were emerging out of rapid industrial expansion. Making of an urban culture gave rise to relaxing art camps in

unusual settings. Finally, art and artists were appreciated and at times the Fine Arts Faculty had splutters of interactions with the 'eminent' personalities of the art world.

Prior to my interview for Professorship in Sculpture in 1999, the Officiating Dean had told me that one of the distinguished founding members of the Faculty had remarked to him that, 'the Faculty had gone to dogs'. For some time, most of the retired professors, teachers and former Deans of the Faculty were keen that I taught at the Faculty and possibly took charge.

Following interview of professorship in Sculpture on 28 Feb 1999, Professor and Head of Painting, wife of the Officiating Dean, had promised that they would 'cooperate' as they understood that I would be appointed as the next Dean. The former Dean had told me stories of endless difficulties created by some of his colleagues throughout his tenure from 1993-1999. It seemed that some teachers and Heads as Readers from Art History and Applied Arts as well as Painting teachers were involved. They were referred as 'ghanchakkars' or solid spin tops. (i.e. Ex Head of Art History was made In-Charge Dean on 29 Nov 2002 and later on the Dean by Sept 2003.) The couple seemed rather excited for having 'brought a new professor into the Faculty' as the Officiating Dean as a Reader in Graphics seemed too keen to be relieved by handing over the charge in 'good hands'. I was aware of deteriorating situation of teaching standards, administration and management. However, I was interested to see for myself if there was something that I could do for Sculpture with my alma mater.

On 22 May 1999, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, appointed me as Professor of Sculpture and charge of Headship of Sculpture Department at the Faculty of Fine Arts was given by the Officiating Dean, Reader and Ex-Head of Graphics (Printmaking). By 20 July, I was made an Officiating Dean.

However, remarks like 'What does he know? He is only an Officiating Dean', could be heard from the Professor of Painting, near the Faculty office and library. In less than a month, there were hints of times to come. In a small city, provincialism and parochialism seemed to be in tandem in one of the smallest Faculties for the Visual Arts at the University.

I wrote to the Registrar of the MSU and Secretary of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi to separate joint notification for Lecturer in 'Fine Arts & Performing Arts' as it had been creating unnecessary confusion about 'minimum qualification for teachers in the Fine Arts'. (21 June 1999, FFA/SC/398) The notification read:

"For Lecturer in the Fine Arts, Performing Arts:
Master's Degree in a relevant subject or an equivalent degree or PG Diploma recognized by the University with at least 55% of marks or its equivalent grade and good academic record with a minimum of 2 year's experience."

Post Graduate Diploma is not offered in Fine Arts as was done in Performing Arts. However, convenient misinterpretations have led to appointments of Post Diploma holders in Fine Arts considering them as equivalent of a P.G. Diploma unavailable in Visual Arts. Post Diploma has nothing to do with the PG Diploma i.e. Higher Secondary + 3 years, then, offered by the Faculty of Performing Arts. Post Diploma Courses in Fine Arts do not involve Theory, History and Philosophy of Art, Dissertation and Viva Voce unlike a Masters Degree. It allows one to pursue practical training in the studio. MA Degree as well as Post Diploma is offered since 1950, when the Faculty of Fine Arts began first University level Degree courses in India. As per norms of the Post Graduate Council of the M.S. University, a Post Diploma holder is not eligible to pursue research as well as instruct and guide Post Graduate students. Management, Engineering, Technology, Performing Arts and Fine Arts are among the Professional Courses at the University level.

The medium of instruction is known to be English at the Faculty of Fine Arts, as with the rest of the MS University, which is special, even unique among the Universities of Gujarat.

Despite a lecturer's in Sculpture conditional appointment and ineligibility to fulfill minimum qualifications, the University had not removed him for over 3 years. His appointment order states the following (Office Order No. ADE/TS/(1)/464 of 17/09/1998):

“As per provision of the revised 0.198 the teacher is supposed to clear the Eligibility test being conducted by the UGC...within a period of probation.”....“..the teacher is required to meet with this requirement without fail, failing which his services are liable to be terminated only on this ground. Before joining the appointment, he has to submit an undertaking in the prescribed proforma attached herewith and unless he produces that he will not be allowed to join the assignment.”

On 11 August 1999, I as an officiating Dean resigned. On 17 August 1999, Heads and Teachers of the Faculty went to meet the Vice Chancellor in support of the Dean as I had resigned because the VC had issued an appointment order to a temporary lecturer in Sculpture not fulfilling requirements of the minimum qualification which were already in force.

On 22 March 2002, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council accredited four star status to ‘The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda’. *‘Our Faculty was always five stars; now, we have got four!’ was explained by the Ex Officiating Dean in the Faculty to his teaching staff in the Printmaking.*

Some Heads had felt that they were better acquainted with ‘traditions’ of the Faculty and University, in regard with my Officiating Deanship from July 1999. Hence, I highlighted that with my nomination for the Deanship that there were two more Professors by mid 2001, in the Art History Department; one on ‘merit’ the other on ‘career advancement’. Moreover, in October 1998, a Lecturer in Graphics was also made Professor of Painting.

During one of the meeting of Deans in mid 2002, the Dean of Arts Faculty had referred to a case of a lecturer made Professor in another faculty with due reservations associated with such appointments, saying that it was unique case at the MSU. I helped to clarify that there was a similar case in the Fine Arts as a lecturer from Printmaking was made a Professor of Painting.

On 2 April 2002 (FFA/SC/Est/7), I wrote to the Registrar as Head of sculpture and Dean to report ineligibility as well as non-suitability of the Lecturer in Sculpture on an extended probation.

By first week of May 2002, the new Vice Chancellor had joined the MSU in Baroda. Till then, *the Pro Vice Chancellor was In-charge, as there was no Vice Chancellor for nearly one year.*

On May 8 2002, an acting I/C Head of Painting had rushed to the Uni. Office to tender his ‘resignation’ from an ‘In-charge Headship’ to protest against the Dean. It was in support of ‘his’ autonomy and freedom of the department. He was seen by the Deputy Registrar, and came to learn that his Headship was not on the record, as it was an arrangement made by the Head, while going on her sabbatical from Sept 2001 for a year. Soon, the students of Painting sent a petition against the Dean. Later, the I/C Head managed to see the VC. A few days later the students met the VC at his residence when the VC had also called for their teacher.

Standing Committee for the Deanship was going to meet on 11 May 2002. External Examiners were to come on 13th May for the final Year Display for the UG and PG Students, the Heads are responsible to prepare the UG results in the Summer Vacation which began from 20 May 2002. However, the In-charge Head of Painting had booked railway tickets for the Summer vacation. Then, a Lecturer and former I/C Head of Painting for some years, was on leave. On his return, he took In-charge Headship on 10 May 2002. The Painting teachers wrote a petition signed by them all to project their unity and condemned ‘highhandedness’ of their Dean.

On 12 May 2002, the VC visited the Painting Department in the morning, a day before the Annual Display of works by final year UG and PG students during the University Exams. From there on, the VC began to establish rapport with the Painting staff and students. The Professor and Head of Painting had dropped in just to introduce herself to the new VC from her sabbatical.

I shall remember one of my visits to the Art History Department, when I went to see the final assessment of theory examination in progress. There was a visiting External Examiner, Professor and Head and a Reader with bunch of answer papers on a large table. The Head told me that ‘sometimes’ there were answer

papers which did not relate to any questions from the questions asked. In response to my obvious astonishment, he quickly added that, 'But, 'if one could imagine the question, the answer would be correct'. I pondered upon how they dealt with such candidates. The Professor added that, "In this case he knew the student to be 'good' and hard working". It was a revelation that creative discretion was so generously extended to a theory subject like Art History & Aesthetics. I did not bother to look for the lucky graduate getting away with an easy M.A. The examiners would have known better if it was a case of simple copying through unfair means. If so, it is punishable by barring the candidate for two consecutive University examinations.

On 14 June 2002, the Reader in Sculpture, who taught Pottery/Ceramics for over 30 years, had retired. There was no permanent teacher left in the Department except the Professor as Head. Since Feb 1999, The University had held no interviews for recruiting new teachers.

Sculpture Department has 80 students from Preparatory to Sr. MA & Post Diploma. From mid 90's onwards, Temporary Lecturers and later on, Teaching Assistants form the core of the teaching staff. Having attended formal and informal gathering, it was soon learnt that the new VC preferred everyone to visit him and talk about the goings on. It was beginning of his 3 year term in office in a large residential University. The leader of the University was getting preoccupied in a novel setting.

By late June 2002, it was easy to observe a disconcerting attitude by the VC, which seemed to be disastrous for Sculpture with one Professor, out of seven vacant teachers (including a Reader). The VC's personal preference to retain an ineligible lecturer was to be a revelation. *As compared with the bigger faculties in the University, Fine Arts had difficulties and problems. Sculpture remains the least staffed department in the Faculty. Waiting and wavering by the administration was delaying much needed appointments.*

On 2 July 2002 (FFA/Dean/229), following two previous meetings with the VC & PVC, it was clear that the VC was in favor of an ineligible lecturer in Sculpture. As informed by the VC, the former Officiating Dean had told the VC that, 'I was likely to 'run away any time'. To bring on record the Head & Dean's position, I wrote to the VC, to report non-suitability of the lecturer in Sculpture; even after an extended probation since 8 Feb 2001. Unlike other teachers in the Faculty, this is the only case of such a conditional appointment. An extension of an extra year was given to him along with 10 other lecturers from the M.S. University. But, unlike others, the candidate does not possess the minimum MA Degree in his subject to fulfill requirement of appearing in the NET Exam., before confirmation as a Lecturer.

Moreover, a confidential report of the faculty was enclosed for the VC in regard with the appointment of the Dean. It was clarified that I had completed my three years as an Officiating Dean and highlighted some issues like the curriculum/prospectus, students exchange and other matters required to be reviewed since 1993. Despite reminders, necessary inputs from the teachers had been awaited for over last two years. It was desirable that the faculty members worked towards improving the quality of learning and teaching environment. There was no initiative by the Chairman of Board of Studies for last 6 years. I wrote to the University that there were three colleagues as Professors, possessing required knowledge of 'traditions suitable to be the next Dean', as I had wished to concentrate my work in Sculpture which had suffered from gross neglect.

On 5 July 2002, the VC appointed a Syndicate Committee to investigate the case a Lecturer in Sculpture, going against an emphatic Office Note which was backed by the Experts Committee's and Head and Dean's Report (17 May FFA/117) confirming ineligibility of the lecturer to continue. There was also an emergency meeting of the Deans during the Syndicate meeting on 2 July; the VC, Registrar and PVC did not inform the Dean and Head of Sculpture about the VC's course of action; instead, the Ex Officiating Dean(the Reader in Graphics) was consulted by the VC. The same Syndicate meeting had also confirmed appointment of my Deanship.

Anyone who has studied at the Faculty and taught for over 24 years, was working as a Reader, Head of the Department, as well as an Officiating Dean and claimed to be the first Masters Degree holder from Graphics (Printmaking), would have been aware that the 'Post Graduate Diploma' is not offered by the Faculty of Fine Arts. The VC wanted to overlook External Expert's Report and advice of the Dean and

Head of Sculpture Department. I was told by a Senior Professor and a Syndicate Member that the Lecturer in Sculpture was supported by a political faction of the ruling party that he had recently joined.

Soon, the Deputy Registrar of the University (Administration and Establishment), who had worked on the case of the lecturer in Sculpture was transferred to the Academic Section.

On 10-11 July 2002, following instructions, a written reminder was sent on the first day of the admissions, for Post Graduate Admissions, that the Heads should conduct a written test. A Committee of 3 teachers was advised to be formed for the departments. However, all 6 Painting teachers sat on the interview panel. Subject Teachers of Painting and Printmaking (Graphics), including Ex Officiating Dean, overlooked instructions. Other four departments had followed the procedures.

“There are some problems and they will definitely try to deal with it”, said the Vice Chancellor on 11 July 2002, in the context of the problems in the Faculty to the Indian Express.

The authorities seemed to be acknowledging problems that they were creating to remove the Dean with the help of a select group of teachers.

The Syndicate appointed me as the Dean on 12 July 2002 (SR No.(ADM)2002-VII-10/207). A letter of resignation from the Deanship was sent to the Registrar, VC and PVC for their lack of response to the Head of Sculpture and Dean and not taking him into ‘confidence’ in the case of a Lecturer in Sculpture.

A professor from University of Delhi had telephoned to say that his son had failed to get an MA admission, despite securing top marks in BA Painting in this Faculty. “The admission procedure and criteria based on mere interview was unfair”, he said and added that he would send copies of the Supreme Court’s verdicts. He also added that he had met the VC in New Delhi and further requested me to look into the case of his son. He concluded by saying that he had planned to take the matter to the High Court as advised by the MSU Vice Chancellor during his meeting in New Delhi.

A day later, the son of the professor came to inform me that on 12 July he had been to Ahmedabad to initiate legal action against the MA Painting Admissions but there was a technical difficulty.

‘Look at grass the way a cow looks at it’, was reported by the Indian Express on 14 July 2002, as a lecturer in Painting was observed squatting on grass with some students for a drawing lesson. The newspaper reported that, ‘Senior teachers in the faculty did not seem to be really happy with the public airing of differences of opinion’ by the Dean. “Mistry is a man with a big image and hence, great action was expected from him,” by adding that, “I don’t think there are any major differences. Anyway, I hardly meet him once in three months”, concluded the former Officiating Dean as a Reader in Printmaking.

14 July 2002, Fine Arts professors at odds, The Indian Express, Vadodara Newslines, Vadodara

A Syndicate member from Fine Arts and I met the Pro Vice Chancellor on 15 July. As expected by the VC they had come to persuade me to continue as the Dean till the VC returned from one of his many visits to New Delhi.

Those having failed to get admission in MA Painting had met the VC on 18 July 2002. As the Dean, I asked the teachers involved to comment for their non-compliance of the advised PG admission procedure. A Senior Lecturer clarified that he had considered it as an ‘Interview Test’, two of them said that they had followed the ‘tradition’ while almost all had followed the In-charge Head’s request to be on the panel. The Ex acting I/C Head and one of the lecturer had ‘no further comment to add’. Three subject teachers of Graphics, including an Ex Officiating Dean and Ex Head as Reader did not respond. All correspondence was handed over to the VC. Few days later, he said that he had returned the file to Fine Arts, which never reached to the Faculty office.

“Shocking Interview Results of MVA”, Students of Painting handed over a petition to the VC on 20 July 2002. I met the VC and over a cup of coffee, he went on about his concern and support for my Deanship. I explained that it would be better for him to accept my resignation, as there was little that a Dean could do

for the Fine Arts Faculty and the most neglected department needed to be attended. The VC and PVC (who had joined later on) made supportive gestures and summed it up by saying that, 'if I left the Deanship; my detractors would feel that they have won'. They opined that it was important to stick to the job with 'their' support.

A Senior Painting teacher explained that the leading teachers were using students for sending petitions. It seemed that my Deanship was to have no constructive role in the Faculty. By now, the VC as a leader seemed to use everyone involved to collect contrary information for an eventual removal of the Dean.

"There have been some problems in the faculty and as Dean, he can do what he thinks is proper. We are always there to assist him", said the VC to the Indian Express in Vadodara on 23 July 2002 about the role of the Dean.

The VC seemed to be referring to the problem of MA admissions in Painting that he had encouraged. He was keen that the Dean finalized the admissions; including the son of a professor from the University of Delhi by using dissent of some teachers.

The PVC's office sent a message for the Painting teachers to meet by 1.45 pm at the Uni. Office on 25 July 2002. A few went to see the VC instead, and told me that perhaps, 'the rest had met the VC on their own'. A Sr. Lecturer informed me that there were no words of wisdom about the Entrance Test or else.

The In-charge Head of Painting responded with 4 extra names for the Painting admission, signed by all teachers of the Department on 29 July 2002. Now, their letter explained that they had followed procedure as per the Syndicate resolution of 1993, and recommended 4 extra names for PG and Post Diploma courses, 25% above the prescribed intake; based on infrastructure and facilities. Thus, the PG Level admissions in Painting came to an end.

On 5 August 2002, the Registrar and ADE section was on the phone for a few days. I was reminded to send joining report of the Dean, 'to make their work easy'. I knew that it was hopeless. I was told that I could resign later on, but I should send the joining report; which was sent. (FFA/Dean/328, 5/8/02)

A Junior Painting teacher sent a time table for Optional Subject in 'Pottery', to the Head of Sculpture. Then, there were no Temporary Teachers in Sculpture as interviews were not conducted yet. They were advised to manage the subject for a small number of students (letters explaining the situation with the Sculpture Department and their Optional subject to the in-charge Head were sent on 8/8/02 FFA/PT/349, 10/8/02 FFA/PT/362 and 17/8/02 FFA/PT/381) and another I/C Head seemed to be sympathetic with the difficulties.

With a view to inform the authorities to solve institutional difficulties that dogged the running of the Faculty, I sent '90 days Notice of Termination of Professorship in Sculpture', to the VC and Registrar, in the interest of the future of higher education in Sculpture Department and the Faculty on 13 August 2002 (FFA/Dean/370). The notice included the case of a Lecturer in Sculpture, incapable to fulfill the minimum requirements, Incomplete Faculty Accounts from 1997-98 till Jan 2000 resulting into repeated Audit queries, and Students Welfare Accounts from 1994-95 with less than scant details and Academic matters from 1994 onwards, which included the following:

- a. *Curriculum: From preparatory to MA, the Prospectus is not being followed i.e. In Practical Subjects i.e. Pottery and Printmaking, page 25, meant to be Optional Studio are taught without the option.*
- b. *Prospectus: Page 25, Compulsory Studio Course for Preparatory is not revised after the introduction of 12th standard as the prerequisite for BA/ Diploma courses in 1994. The old Preparatory syllabi meant for old 2 years, flood the 1 year Preparatory Course even in the reprint of 1998-99.*
- c. *M.A. Dissertation: As per Assessment Rules, Page 96, (the student will) "...The dissertation should be prepared in the prescribed manner and handed over to the Dean, through the HoD positively before the commencement of the Theory examinations." There is no prescribed manner that is followed by the*

Departments for M.A. Dissertation.

d. Board of Studies and Faculty Board: From 19 Sept 2000, 18 Oct 2001, 21 Dec 2001 and 13 March 2002, despite reminders for individual academic inputs, before and after UGC's recent directive to revise the Prospectus, Curriculum, Syllabi and Students Exchange (Abroad) to meet changing demands and needs, the teachers involved as members of the Board of Studies and the Faculty Board and Chairman have not responded.

e. Recent Board of Studies election out of 8 teachers, Painting and Applied Art have 5 and 3 teachers respectively, which includes their Heads. Other 3 subjects and departments are not represented at all. There is no balance of representation for the subjects or any expertise that it requires.

(Note: this was reconsidered later through a re-election on 16 Jan 2003. New nominations added the following: Art History 4, Graphics 2 and Sculpture 1, now, the only teacher left in the Department.)

f. Entrance Test for MA/ Post Diploma: This year it was ignored by the subject teachers of Painting and Graphics, which led to additional 4 seats and late admissions in Painting.

g. M.A. Admission Prerequisite: It is 12th+4 for the Under Graduate Degree, as per the Prospectus and Admission Form. Perhaps, due to lack of clarity, candidates with 10+5 degree are issued Provisional Eligibility Certificate and admitted for an MA by the Departments.

(Later on, the Ex Head of Art History was again made Chairman of Board of Studies from 20 Feb 2003 for 3 more years, prior to being made an In Charge Dean from Dec 2002.)

Following a departmental gathering with some teachers, the Painting students sent a petition to the VC 'About non availability of a teacher' in 'Pottery' on 17 August 2002. As Head of Sculpture, I had further explained my position about their subject to the In-charge Head of Painting (FFA/PT/381) and again on 19 Aug 2002, the VC was also informed of my letters and correspondence.

Next day, I sent another letter to In-charge Head of Painting (FFA/PT/384) and on 23 Aug 2002. It seems that the VC preferred to send contrary signals. It is understood that the Registrar, incapable to comprehend the subject was advising the VC. The Painting students were used to create petitions. At the insistence of interfering teachers, the response from another I/C Head began to carry signatures of all 6 teachers to prove the departmental 'unity and 'democracy'.

Continuation of administrative cynicism had compelled me to serve "90 days Notice of Termination of my Professorship in Sculpture" was prompted due to continued harassment by the authority using other departments and teachers against a teacher from the most neglected department led to 'renunciation' of my Deanship and Headship of Sculpture. On 12 May 2002 the VC had admitted that he did not know what 'art' was. Hence, his intervention in practical academic priorities in the faculty was inappropriate. Optional 'Pottery' for Painting has 15 Undergraduate students against 80, from Preparatory to Sr. M.A. in Sculpture. However, the VC was supporting the Painting teachers for their 'unity' and continued to use a group of teachers against the least staffed department of Sculpture.

Optional Mural Design exercises in Painting (known as Pottery) were taught by Sculpture, as they were unable to deal with the subject in the past. Since last several years, Painting has the facilities to guide, instruct and teach the subject. The In-charge Head of Painting was prepared to cooperate with the subject. However, a few teachers led by Ex I/C Head and Reader, sought intervention of the VC, as they were not taken into 'confidence' by the next In-charge Head who took charge after his resignation on 23 August 2002.

The arrangement of Optional Mural exercises for Painting students' in Sculpture were introduced in 1983. Unlike today, at that time, they had no infrastructure and equipment to work with wheel and had no kilns. Painting has two specialized Mural Design teachers with training and experience. Now they had an entire floor extended under the UGC grant. They have been using ceramics and terracotta with glazes and have

one electric and one gas kiln. They have facilities and space to look after their curricular necessities. Unlike Sculpture teachers who are constantly busy, 3 teachers from UG level Painting have no students to teach, once their students go for the Optional subjects for minimum 30-45 days in a year. Students have 4 other options apart from Pottery, which offer them access for an MA/Post Diploma in those subject streams for further specialization.

The Head of Painting, for her Sabbatical Project Proposal of 2001-02, Annexure 11, page 11 wrote what they already had achieved in the Mural,

“...A part of my sabbatical leave would be spent in experimenting with ceramics. The Deptt. of Painting has recently established a Gas Kiln in visual section for students to experiment in large scale visuals with various glazes and slip techniques. To further the scope of these techniques, I would like to collaborate with factories in and around Baroda to try specific slips and glazes available commercially in these places. These experiments would help in teaching the techniques to students more effectively.”

Existing infrastructure in Sculpture for Ceramics (old Pottery Section) had managed to cater students from Preparatory, Sculpture as well as Optional Pottery from Painting. Pottery as craft, a Certificate Course was discontinued in 1983 and it is not taught as a craft. Understandably, the Sculpture undergraduates ought to have greater access to Ceramics facilities as opposed to Painting over their 3 year specialization i.e. 4:16 credit hours. The UGC Model Curriculum to be implemented from June 2002, had emphasized specialization in the subject stream before Post Graduation admissions. Accordingly, Post Graduation in Ceramic Sculpture requires necessary working experience and knowledge of Ceramics at the UG level in the department of Sculpture. The VC seemed to have decided to undermine the Head of Sculpture and Dean by taking a sneaking interest in favour of Painting.

In the past, Optional subjects like Screen Printing and Typography for Applied Art had been stopped by Graphic (Printmaking) in early 90s, when they could be taught by the Applied Art Department. Then, it was affecting over 90 students as compared to average 15 students from Painting. Applied Arts has the largest number of students and unlike Sculpture, Graphics does not even offer Undergraduate Degree or Diploma. As in the case with Applied Arts Department, it was neither a matter for the Board of Studies, nor the Painting Department. Frankly, the VC's personal interest and intervention was unseemly.

Prior to 23rd August, during a chance meeting with the VC & PVC, I clarified to the VC that there was no need for his 'help' in this regard with the Optional Pottery. However, the VC must have been keen or he would not have rushed to meet the Painting teachers on 23 August 2002, along with the PVC in the Dean's Office. There was a joint meeting and discussion where the VC said that, 'he didn't know Pottery'. There were 6 teachers from Painting against one from Sculpture. Despite parallel facilities in the Department and avoidance of work by the Painting teachers, they went on with their impractical notions of 'tradition' and 'inter-discipline'. While leaving the Dean's Office and descending the stairs, the VC remembered to praise 'unity' of the Painting teachers, as explained by their I/C Head.

Again, the VC used teachers of Painting to receive a petition against the Dean after his meeting in the Faculty on 26 August 2002.

From August 2002-January 2003, most decisions in the Syndicate were taken in adjourned meetings, with the help of 6-7 members close to the VC and Registrar. The non-quorum meetings had set a new way forward until after the Syndicate Election which were expected in February 2003. New Syndicate meeting took place on 31 March 2003 (The teaching members of the staff were playing time till the Syndicate Elections were held).

Having observed an utter lack of response by the authorities, on 3 September 2002 (FFA/Dean/421), I sent a letter of 'renunciation of Head and Deanship' to relieve myself from the voluntary duties, as the authorities seemed undermining the Dean and Head of the Department at all levels while playing politics at the expense of the future of the Sculpture Department and the Faculty. I wished to keep off from the idiosyncrasies of the authorities' ongoing maneuvers and 'dirty politics'.

It is understood that the Registrar was in touch with the Ex Officiating Dean and others (what is popularly

known as 'dog-diplomacy' by those who see him with their pets, mainly during the morning walk on the grounds of the D.N. Hall of the University). One can perceive that from the timing of the University's actions and teachers' reactions and other related incidents in the faculty that they were aware of day today developments.

Twice my letters had coincided with the resignation of the Commerce Dean (who once again had resigned on 9 July 2002). Then, the MSU VC was reported to have said to the Indian Express that "We will look into everything one by one" on 5 September 2002.

The PVC and a Syndicate member from the Fine Arts were used by the VC to meet me and urge to continue as the Head and Dean on 7 September 2002. The PVC as a Senior-most teacher could not conceal his disquiet with the handling of the matters by the top authorities. It seemed that he too was kept in the dark by the Registrar and VC. He said that as an academic, he had been continuing 'in the interest of the University', and added that, 'he would not return to me, if the main issue would not get sorted by the next time'.

On 7 September 2002(FFA/Dean/431), I sent the Registrar details of letters and correspondence circulated in support of minimum standards of maintenance in Higher Education at the Uni. level set by the UGC. The Governor of Gujarat as Visitor of the M S University of Baroda was sent key documents including 90 Days Termination Notice of Professorship in Sculpture. I had sent copies to the Chancellor (the senior most member of the royal family of the Maharaja of Baroda), Deans and Heads of Institutions, Syndicate and some Senate Members.

Ex Head of Art History, was also given a copy of my 90 days termination notice when he visited the Sculpture in August 2002. *(Later, he was appointed as an In-charge Dean and Dean on 29 Nov 2002 till late 2006)*

By mid September, the actual Head and Professor of Painting had returned from her sabbatical leave.

It was learnt on 1 October 2002 that following an election of members for the Joint Board of Studies, out of 5 Departments, 8 teachers were elected uncontested i.e. 5 from Painting and 3 from Applied Arts which included their Heads. Due to serious lack of eligible teachers and maneuvers of democratic procedures had left none from Sculpture, Graphics and Art History. However, Museology (with 3 out of total 4 teachers) has a separate Board of Studies.

It was evident from the election of the Chairman, Board of Studies in 1999, that little was spared to create desired results through manipulation by the former Officiating Dean at the expense of academic priorities of the institution as was evident while understanding Work Load of the teachers for the departments in June 1999. Credit Hours and understanding work of a teacher during their duty hours as per the UGC remain hazy even after a couple of decades of teaching in the Faculty.

When one of the Syndicate members had raised the question of the Dean having to resign twice, in the Senate Meeting on 5 October 2002, in the context of my termination notice of Professorship, I had clarified that it was "still on". During the dinner break, the VC bumped into me while exchanging niceties in the door way. He showed no knowledge of my 90 Days Termination Notice of Professorship or the issues raised or my earlier reason of resignation from the Deanship. But, he mentioned the word 'threat' in the context of my letters. However, he concluded jovially that, 'let's meet'. In the Senate break, I was informed by a Senior Professor and a Syndicate Member that, several months ago, the Lecturer in Sculpture had joined the political group which was supporting the Vice Chancellor.

However, at no stage the VC or Registrar ever desired to summon me to discuss the matter or raise the matter in the Syndicate and set up a Committee to look into the difficulties.

On 14 October 2002 (FFA/Dean/SC/552), Three Temporary Teachers in Sculptures wrote to the Head of Sculpture that they were unwilling to continue, as the University hadn't implemented minimum qualification as per the UGC norms and they saw no future. The Dean sent a copy of the letter for the

Registrar. Then on 17 October 2002 (FFA/ Dean/ 523), following my e-mail sent to the VC, PVC & Registrar on 14 Oct 2002, I sent a reminder of letters sent to the authorities that there was 'no response' from them since 2 July 2002.

On 19 October 2002 (FFA/Dean/534), as a Dean, I replied to the Registrar in response to 'Confirmation of a new Reader in Graphics', that he did not possess the basic UG Degree and a recognized MA by the MSU. The case of a Temporary Teaching Assistant, whose job was terminated in 1987, on the basis of not possessing a valid PG Degree was referred to the University (Ref. no. ADE/TS(1) /1533 of 7-8 August 1987 and Memo no. ADE/TS (1)/540 26 Sept 1987). The Reader in question was appointed in May 1999, by the other Reader in Graphics when he was Officiating Dean. Since 7 Sept 1989, the M. S. University had accepted the minimum qualification for their teachers as per the University Grants Commission, where any teacher i.e. Lecturer, Reader or Professor, must possess minimum valid UG and PG Degrees to be able to conduct research/PhD as a teacher in Higher Education.

In Fine Arts, inadequate appointments seemed to have created grave lack of academic and creative interest. The Faculty has offered BA and MA Degrees in the subject for last 50 years, yet they could recruit under qualified teachers as their permanent teaching staff. I can recall several teachers repeatedly asking for the meaning of 'credit hours', including an Ex Officiating Head of Museology with 9 years of experience(made Professor in 2003). Some just would not stop talking about the reputation of the Faculty, while failing to read(in some cases) as well as follow the prospectus apart from the University's notices and circulars. The following recruitments in the departments illustrate the above:

Graphics(Printmaking):

*1 Reader without an UG and recognized Post Graduate Degree by the MSUniversity.
1 Lecturer with Diploma and Post Diploma in Printmaking.*

Painting:

*1 Diploma holder was made a Reader, without a recognized MA Degree.
1 Lecturer has qualifications similar to the one made Reader in Painting.
2 More teachers with Diploma and Post Diploma(1 in Mural Design) and,*

Sculpture:

1 Lecturer with Post Diploma in Sculpture with a conditional appointment after 7 Sept 1998 unlike all other teachers in the University.

My letter of 19 October 2002, FFA/Dean/534 sited the case of a well known woman Painter from Vadodara, whose job was terminated as a Temp. Teaching Assistant in 1987. Letter to the Registrar was sent on 23 October 2002 (FFA/Dean/547) for information. In the case of the Reader in Graphics selected by my predecessor as Officiating Dean since May 1999, who did not possess a recognized Masters Degree or an equivalent Degree recognized by the M.S. University of Baroda by explaining that to the Registrar.

Photography and Process (Advertising Design) does not offer Degree or Diploma in the subject and the teachers are diploma holders with requisite experience employed in the early-mid 70s.

On 21 October 2002, the University had informed the local Press about the Hon. Governor seeking detail in my case in regard with the termination notice. Then, I reminded the Registrar to make arrangement for the 'charge of Headship of Sculpture and Deanship' from 13 Nov 2002 at the end of my 90 Days Notice (FFA/Dean/539).

At the University's behest query from the Governor of Gujarat, 'The Mistry issue: Bhandari seeks details', appeared in the Indian Express on 22 October 2002. As the Dean, 'he has been also not able to settle the matter, said Prof. Upadhyaya, the VC'. The MSU authorities are likely to report back to the Governor after the Syndicate meeting on Oct 25, wrote The Indian Express, Vadodara Newline, Vadodara

The VC & Registrar are understood to have mislead their Syndicate members into accepting the Dean's

resignation on the pretext of 'inability of the Dean to continue' in their office note, instead of responding to the 90 Days Termination Notice of my Professorship.

The Registrar was sent a chronicle of events in regard with the VC's initiative to remove the Dean by 'misinforming' all about the issue of 90 days termination notice. I sent a copy to the Governor, Chancellor, Deans, Syndicate members and others on 23 October 2002 (FFA/Dean/547).

23 October 2002, Syndicate to discuss resignation of Fine arts Dean, Governor seeks details: Uni. authorities cover culprits against the Deanship, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

After a month or so, a lecturer from Commerce and a Govt. nominee for the Syndicate, understood to be close to the VC, had opined in one of the meetings of the Deans that, 'Academic matters like a Dean's resignation can't be discussed in the Syndicate'. He said that in lucid vernacular Gujarati. Apparently, he seemed to be speaking on behalf of the authorities. (Not until July 2003 that I came to learn that he was the person in-charge for the M.S. University's affairs, from the faction of the ruling party. It is understood that the VC used his bashful manner and rabble rousing energy to convince their Syndicate members. Hence, he became a significant instrument in removal of me as the Dean. Since end of his term as a Syndic in spring 2003, I was told that, this time, it was going to be a long wait for him to get his nominated extended. He is believed to be in-charge of the MSU affairs on behalf of the political faction of the ruling party).

24 October 2002, Mistry's resignation may leave students in the lurch, If Mistry's resignation is accepted, 80 students of the Sculpture department will have to do without a professor and a reader, The Indian Express, Vadodara News line, Vadodara

-Fine Arts Dean of the Uni; BUTA asks for reconsideration of resignation of Prof. Mistry, Sandesh, Vadodara

-Fine Arts Dean, BUTA to urges the Syndicate to reconsider resignation of Mistry, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

The authorities had not responded to my letters since 2 July 2002, including termination notice of Professorship in Sculpture. Appendix-4 in the context of my 90 Days Notice, was interpreted as 'resignation' of the Dean and thus misleading the Syndicate Agenda of 25th October 2002. On 26 October 2002, the VC and Registrar selectively used the word 'resignation' and not 'reasons' from my letters of 12 July and 3 September 2002. They used 'inability of Mistry to continue' as Dean to the Syndicate members, by ignoring the 90 Days Termination Notice. That afternoon, the Head of Art History, was given copy of the letter written to the Registrar on 23 October 2002, FFA/Dean/547 in the Photography Section for information.

On 26th, the day of the meeting, I had sent a letter to the Syndicate members 'to give fair thought' to the item of 'Dean's resignation' in the context of my Termination Notice of Professorship and to set a time limit to allow me to continue with the Deanship until then.

As explained by some Syndicate members, the Register and VC had sold stories that the Dean 'cannot write' to the Governor and he had 'double standards' using a case of a Reservation candidate admitted in MA Sculpture, who was previously appointed as Temporary Teaching Assistant by the University from the SEBC Reservation category in Sculpture. By 1.50pm the former officiating Dean, peered through the window of Graphics and saw two Syndicate members who were visiting the Faculty to request me to continue in the Faculty of Fine Arts, before going for the Syndicate meeting. That evening, the VC's is known to have referred to the Dean as an 'opposition' man.

By midnight of 26 Oct 2002, I sent email to the VC and PVC to clarify that it was at the VC's initiative that my 90 days notice of termination of Professorship was accepted by the Syndicate and reminded that my services would come to an end on 13 November 2002.

Now, the lecturer in Sculpture began meeting the Painting and other teachers during the morning break in the morning on 26 October 2002.

26 October 2002, *Three teachers of Fine Arts in mood to resign, Support for Prof. Mistry's issues: no teacher left in the sculpture, and an inbox news: The VC says: Uni. in worse condition than Bihar, Syndicate Adjourned again: the case of pardon for an MLA's daughter indicate tussle, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara*

-Deanship of Fine Arts and dirty politics for a Senate vote, inside story of Dean Dhruva Mistry, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

-Copying cases to figure in Syndicate meet today, The Indian Express, Vadodara Newline, Vadodara

27 October 2002, *The Uni. Syndicate accepts resignation of the Fine Arts Dean, proposal for abeyance of the resignation issue was voted upon: Five members walked out, Sandesh, Vadodara*

-Prof. Dhruva Mistry resigns from all designations, Loksatta, Vadodara

FFA/Dean/558 hard copy of the email of 26 Oct 2002 was sent to the VC, MSU. on 28 October 2002

28 October 2002, *One vote and Mistry's out as Fine Arts Dean, Behind the-scenes manoeuvres to oust Mistry seemed to have gained the upper hand as his resignation was finally accepted by MSU Syndicate, The Indian Express, Vadodara News line, Vadodara*

-Dhruva Mistry resigns from MSU fine arts faculty, The Times of India, Ahmedabad

On 1 November 2002 The PVC, and two Syndicate members; one a Senior Dean and other, a teacher from the Fine Arts, visited to ask me to continue as 'Head and Professor' 'in the interest of the institution'. I said that the VC ought to have been aware of my 90 Days Termination Notice of Professorship which came to an end before they communicated the Syndicate decision by late November. 'For the first time in history of the MSU that PVC had voted against the VC', explained the Senior Dean. However, it was a matter of speculation as why these two teachers were absent from the Syndicate meeting of 25-26 October 2002 during the 'removal of the Fine Arts Dean'. 'The MSU was relatively better as it was before; even in the climate of an overall decline of quality in the higher education in our Universities, 'we' should think about the 'institution', as the VCs come and go', was explained by the Senior Dean. I reminded them that the VC had lost moral authority of the house through personalized procedures and succeeded with misinformation. I said that I had come to understand enough over three years of teaching. The Senior Dean said that most people learn that within one year! I asked him that, 'how long had he been teaching?' He said, 'fourty one years.' The PVC and other two absentees seemed content being used by the Registrar and VC.

There was no communication from Registrar and the VC. I was waiting to leave at the end of my three months termination notice.

On 7 November 2002 (FFA/ I/566), the PVC phoned me to inform about the VC's visit to Baroda on 9th and if I could meet him with the Syndicate member from Fine Arts and himself. On 8 November 2002 The VC, PVC and Registrar were sent an e-mail to clarify that except 90 days termination notice, we would meet to discuss matters of institutional interest. On 11 November 2002, I wrote to the Registrar to explain that they had misinterpreted my letters as 'resignation' and his inclusion of them i.e. 12 July and 3 September 2002 in support of their notion of the 'Dean's inability' which amounted to 'official misinformation'. I reminded the Registrar to arrange for the 'charge of Headship of Sculpture and Deanship' after 13 November 2002, with the hard copy of email of 8th Nov. Next day, by 12.15pm, the Syndicate member from Fine Arts and I went to Dhanvantri, residence of the Vice Chancellor and met the PVC and VC. My brother who drove me there waited outside. The PVC wished that I should continue 'to work for the University' and talked about perusal of some issues with Fine Arts Syndicate member. The VC sat tight lipped and glum for a while, before telling me that it was a 'lie' that at his initiative my 'resignation and Termination Notice were accepted. I clarified that it was 'true' as his notion of 'Dean's inability to continue', had only evaded the Dean's 90 days termination notice of Professorship. His removal of me as the Dean would not settle the issues as the Professorship would come to an end on 13 November 2002, well before the Syndicate approved minutes by the end of November 2002 to remove my Deanship.

During the meeting, the Vice Chancellor explained that, 'he did not know the PVC, the Syndicate member present, the former Officiating Dean, the Dean of Fine Arts and others. He had nothing to do with them and none of the problems were created by him. His six months had passed and he had next two and a half years

to go.' I could comprehend his sense of commitment for the MSU, however, he went on repeating that, 'the Dean cannot write to the Governor'. When asked, 'what about the Head and Professor?' he replied that, 'yes, they could'. The I asked him that if he had committed an offence, the VC should initiate an action to seek explanation, set up an inquiry, give a memo, stop increment, even terminate my professorship. But, he went on to repeat that, 'the Dean can't write to the Governor.' By 1.45pm it was time to leave for lunch.

At the end of the meeting by 1.50pm, outside the bungalow, Fine Arts Syndicate member, my brother and I waited for the PVC to come out before leaving for home. In a short while, the PVC came. I asked him about status of the meeting, he said that "it should be considered as if we hadn't met". While asking for reasons about the authorities' lack of response for my termination notice, he said that, "it was decided that they wouldn't respond." Before departing, the PVC concluded that "let's work for the university" and added that "they will try to re-open the issue of resignation of the Dean in the next Syndicate. Before saying goodbye to me, he added that I ought to continue until I was relieved by the University for which I had told that I would think it over. The VC seems to have used the PVC's rapport to ensure that I continued well beyond 13 November 2002, with a hind sight, possibly till mid Dec 2002; until after the end of the State Assembly Elections.

Expecting that the authorities would make arrangements after the Diwali Vacation which ended on 19 November 2002, I considered voluntary extension of work for 2 weeks in the interest of the institution to avoid harm or any disruption, hoping that the authorities would relieve me soon.

11 November 2002, In support of Prof. Mistry's resignation two teachers of Sculpture department offer resignations, Sandesh, Vadodara

On 20 November 2002, In regard with my termination notice, one of the teachers told me that the Professor of Painting was asking that, 'why hadn't the Dean stopped coming yet (to the Faculty)?'

The Syndicate member from teachers of Fine Arts, wrote to the VC for reconsideration of resignation of the Dean on 22 November 2002.

On 23 November 2002, a group of teachers from Painting, Reader, Ex Head & Ex Officiating Dean and two other teachers from Graphics, Head and Ex Head of Art History and an Ex Offg. Head of Museology as well as the lecturer in Sculpture had 'congratulated' the VC for having 'taken the decision' and signed a petition that they had circulated among themselves. They had added that "it will go a long way to restore some of the working atmosphere that had prevailed in the Faculty prior to my appointment". Again, I was reminded of the Officiating Dean being told off by one of the founding members and a senior most sculptor about the state of the Faculty.

It is understood that the VC used his kind of teachers from each department. By late November 2002, the authorities had succeeded in polarizing the faculty members while removing not just the Dean but the Head and Professor of sculpture as well; leaving no teachers in the department with 80 students, except an ineligible lecturer on an unwitting extension of probation.

Registrar's letter SR (ADM) 2002-X-5/588 of 25/11/2002 notified the Head of Sculpture about Resignation of his Deanship for information & necessary action on the subject. Resolution (Appendix-4)(ADM) explained that a 'suggestion' was made by the VC, as Chairman to keep the item in 'abeyance'. In response to this, 6 members had voted in favor of *abeyance* and 7 in favor of accepting the '*resignation of the Dean*'. Now, forgetting the initial motion of *abeyance* by the VC, it added that, 'Accordingly, it was resolved to accept the resignation of Prof. D. Mistry as Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts.'

Many in the University understood that the VC's motion of keeping the Dean's item in 'abeyance' was badly beaten and defeated. By not exercising his casting vote, which had to be in favor of the University; he had lost the 'moral authority' over the house; as observed by a Senior Professor and a Syndic. The PVC had voted in favor of 'abeyance'; and his own nominee in favor of 'acceptance of the resignation'. Out of 7 teaching members in the Syndicate there were 5 vacant seats and 2 were absent i.e. 1 teacher from the

Faculty of Fine Arts a Senior Dean of another faculty. It was reported in the press that a Govt. nominee was rushed from a hospital bed, just before the voting using a mobile phone. He had left the house soon after.

On 26 November 2002, a Senior Professor and a Syndicate Member from the Heads of the Departments, reminded the Registrar that there were unaddressed issues remaining while accepting 'resignation of the Dean of Fine Arts', before the Syndicate meeting of 29 Nov 2002. The next day, four major Faculty Deans from Technology, Commerce, Law, Education & Psychology (and one more) had also supported the request for reconsideration of the Syndicate resolution of removal the Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts. President of Baroda University Teachers' Association gave the VC their Governing Council's decision (BUTA, 30/2002) to reconsider case of the Dean of Fine Arts.

On 28 November 2002 (FFA/Dean/613), I reminded the VC to look into my letters from July 2002 as well as the letter of 26 October 2002. A copy was sent to the PVC for the Syndicate Members for the Syndicate meeting of 29 Nov 2002. The VC was sent another letter to explain that the idea of 'Dean showing inability to continue' was their own creation (FFA/Dean/614). My letter highlighted issues since 2 July 2002, and again, reminded that the 90 days termination notice of my Professorship in Sculpture had already come to an end on 13 November 2002, apart from other unresolved issues.

The Deans, who had signed request for reconsideration of my Deanship, were summoned by the VC on 29 November 2002. Three Deans ended up withdrawing under pressure; one of them was absent.

In sharp contrast to the previous visit by the Faculty teachers on 17 August 1999 in support of the Dean, against a Temp. Lecturer in Sculpture who was not fulfilling the minimum qualification, there was a tacit support for the 'ineligible' lecturer on an extended probation. Now the teaching fraternity was willing to support an under qualified teacher in aid of the VC. By noon of 23 November, Painting Department had readied a petition and the Reader was visiting Art History and Museology to obtain select signatures. The VC is understood to have used his cronies as Heads and teachers for getting 'congratulated' for having 'taken the decision' while asking other Deans to withdraw their support.

Even though, the Secretary of Baroda University Teachers Association had presented the Governing Council's decision to reconsider 'resignation of the Dean', Fine Arts, the VC & Registrar claimed that they had 'not' received any letter. It was surprising for the BUTA office bearers as the letter was given by them in person.

The VC's response to my letter of 28 November (VC/1/2002), stated that my letter contained much misinterpretation of facts, including the meeting at Dhanvantri, which 'was not called at his initiative'. The PVC wouldn't have inquired on 7th unless he was asked to do so at his behest. On 8th, I had also sent an email to both of them to confirm agenda for the meeting on 9th Nov. The VC also sought to explain his decision by the Syndicate about the 'manner' of acceptance of the Dean's resignation that, they "normally preferred the matter to be resolved by consensus and discussion. Whenever it was not possible to arrive at a consensus, decisions were taken, the way it had been done." The VC was willing to accept the issues that I had raised in my termination notice.

29 November 2002, Syndicate member to discuss Mistry's resignation today, The Indian Express, Express Newsline, Vadodara

By noon, the Deputy Registrar (R/ADM/602, 29/11/2002) notified the Dean of 'handing over charge of the Faculty to the next In-charge Dean; appointed by the VC prior to the Syndicate meeting beginning at 2.00pm. The Registrar used the Deputy Registrar to sign and send this by not informing him that my 90 days termination notice had ended in mid Nov and the administration had failed to respond in time. The Ex Head of Art History was appointed In Charge Dean as he had sent a separate letter to the VC instead of signing the petition along with his group of teachers. One of the Govt. nominee as Ex Syndicate member had visited him in the Fine Arts to facilitate this transition. The Syndicate meeting that afternoon was adjourned like others since August 2002.

30 November 2002, Mistry asked to leave before the Syndicate meet, protests by four deans crushed: Anger

in Uni. circles, Gujuarat Samachar, Vadodara

-Fourth meeting since last six months, Uni. Syndicate meeting postponed due to lack of quorum: only seven members present, Sandesh, Vadodara

-Just before the Syndicate meet, Uni. authorities appoint Prof. Deepak Kannal as In-charge Dean, Sandesh, Vadodara

On 2 December 2002 (FFA/SC/ resignations inward no. 611), three Temp. Teachers 1 Lecturer & 2 Teaching Assistants from Sculpture resigned as they did not see the future growth of the Sculpture Department without the authority's support. They left their job with immediate effect.

Now, there was no teacher left in Sculpture, except the Lecturer in question as favored by the VC.

FFA/G/633, The Head of Printmaking (Graphics), Sr. lecturer in Photography, resigned due to 'lack of cooperation from the teachers i.e. the Ex Head as Reader (and former Officiating Dean), a Lecturer and the new Reader without basic UG and PG degree.

Again, on 4 December 2002, I delivered a letter for the Registrar to finalize my accounts and wrote that my voluntary work from 14 November- 4 December had come to an end as he had not yet responded to any issues raised in my letters (FFA/Dean/636, 3-5 Dec 2002). Then, in the interest of maintenance of quality and implementation of minimum standards as per the UGC for teaching appointments in Professional Streams in Higher Education, I sought support of Hon. President of India, Hon. Governor of Gujarat, Hon. Minister of Education, Govt of India, Chairman, University Grants Commission, President, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi and Minister of Education, Govt. of Gujarat, Dy. Secretary, Higher Education, Uni. acts/rules, Govt. of Gujarat, Gandhinagar. They were sent the letters and key documents by post for information.

"He is gone!" exclaimed the Professor of Painting the next morning as she jubilantly greeted the only ineligible Lecturer left in the Sculpture Department.

A day later, following re-election of the BUTA's Office bearers, the VC kindly admitted to the Fine Arts Syndicate member that the letter of resolution of reconsideration of my Deanship, given by the President of BUTA in person had been 'misplaced' on 29 November 2002.

On 11 December 2002, I wrote to the Registrar that he had used the teachers of the Faculty in his clandestine operation to remove the Dean and it was to save and cover himself while failing to respond to my 90 Days termination Notice of Professorship in Sculpture. The PVC's call on 12 December 2002, confirmed that evening that he wanted to discuss the faculty situation with the new I/C Dean and possibly me, as he was meant to attend a students' meeting at the Faculty of Fine Arts. I told the PVC that I was willing to meet without the VC. He told me that the VC as well as the teachers from the faculty were not expected to attend as the PVC had wished to listen to the 'problems' of students.

Even by 13 December 2002, the authorities had not made any arrangement to handover charge of Deanship of the Faculty and Headship of Sculpture despite timely reminders, even though my voluntarily work from 14 November had been stopped since 4 December 2002. After arrival of the PVC by 11.30am, within 10 minutes or so the VC too dropped in. By that time the PVC had reached near the auditorium and was talking with some teachers. The PVC seemed little surprised to see the VC there. Soon, everyone had found their place in the auditorium crammed with chairs in the foreground, and the students flooding the rest of the room including the main door. The In-Charge Dean seemed too keen to sort out the students' problems. The beaming center of attraction was the VC, with the PVC and the new In-charge Dean and me on the either side.

Almost all seemed to be present, including some ex-students of Painting offering solidarity to their own cause. The VC's group of teachers had used a selective group of students to hurl a variety of verbal allegations and demand for qualified teachers in Sculpture by some students. The VC had been misinforming everyone that I was very much "there as the Head and Professor of Sculpture" ignoring my 90 days termination notice which had ended a moth ago. I denied his belief by saying that, "it was not

true". But, the view of the wily leader prevailed as he had not responded for 120 days. Personal differences and petty interests seemed to have contributed for a kind of carnival of quiz; the target was 'Mistry'. The Students' were encouraged and well tutored to use the Dean. The Students' Dean had been an added attraction with all kinds of allegations including sexual harassments. The VC seemed content to take it all with a fixed smile. The chorus of grievances lasted for about half an hour. Having gauged the mood of the Faculty, the leader sought to leave soon after. The PVC carried on with the full airing that was organized for him by the In Charge Dean. Most teachers said little, but some responded at times in the form of a reminder, doubt or emphatic airing of their opinions and views. The faculty auditorium was intermittently filled with many voices and white noise. The leading students seemed to be enjoying an opportunity to be noticed by others and improve their own ratings with their tutors. Most were armature drama enthusiasts working with Fine Arts Natak Company run the present Dean and his teaching assistant. The crowd was pushing in and spilling out of an only entrance/exit of a medium capacity auditorium. The mood of the meeting was visibly loud enactment.

After about half an hour, while leaving the meeting, the PVC admitted to me that it would have been better if I had not joined them. The In Charge Dean went on to continue with the meeting. The PVC was taken aback that some Painting teachers were sniping at him. Before saying goodbye, we nodded for the taste of things to come from a polarized faculty.

The state assembly election result was awaited by 15th December 2002 and victory of the sitting party seemed to be used for the final assault for the Headship in Sculpture. Reportedly, the students were urged and encouraged not to slacken the agitation by the I/C Dean (ex Head of Art History) and the former officiating Dean (ex Reader and Head of Graphics). The media seemed to be briefed on day to day developments as it was a carefully planned show.

14 December 2002, MSU students go on 'creative' protest, the Times of India, Ahmedabad

15 December 2002, Out against Prof. Dhruva Mistry, MS Uni. Fine Arts students on the way to strike after 10 years, Sandesh, Vadodara

-Elections over, but poster war continues: Mistry the target, The Indian Express, Express Newslines, Vadodara

By 15 December 2002, the campaign to 'oust-Mistry' had gained momentum as the authorities had succeeded in misleading everyone about their lack of response for 37 days after the end of my 90 days termination notice. The VC seemed buoyed after the victory in the assembly polls as more winning hands were in his wings.

16 December 2002, Fine arts students step up oust-Mistry crusade, The Indian Express, Express Newslines, Vadodara

17 December 2002, Fine Arts strike, Teachers victimize students: Authorities silent, astonishing movement on even after departure of the Dean, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

In reply to my letter of 11 Dec 2002, sent to the Registrar, he clandestinely used the 'teaching community' of the Faculty to get a response for himself and the VC. There was a staff meeting at the Faculty on 19 December 2002. It carried on the next day. Eventually, the 'teaching community' of the Faculty had decided to remind the VC that they had "resolved to kindly request the University to accept Prof. Mistry's 'resignation' from Headship and Professorship as per my termination notice of 13 August and a letter to the Registrar to settle my accounts till 13 November 2002." Once again, the Registrar didn't act to settle my accounts or anything else.

19 December 2002, Prof. Mistry of the Faculty of Fine Arts, the Uni. Syndicate will write a letter to continue implementation of Head and Professorship, Sandesh, Vadodara

The In-charge and Ex Dean, were reported to be 'uniting' the teachers in the face of an 'unprecedented crisis' for the VC and Registrar's clandestine operation. Wives of some teachers, their friends and alumni were also seen attending protest meetings in the faculty. Hectic lobbying to ask old and retired artists for

their supportive gestures through appearance was initiated by the former Officiating Dean and some Painting and Art History teachers.

20 December 2002, MSU V-C asks fine arts students to withdraw on-going agitation, the Times of India, Ahmedabad

21 December 2002, In the Fine Arts Faculty of the Uni; the Uni. authorities' unpardonable maneuvers and strike, Teachers' chargesheet against Prof. Mistry: playing with future of the students, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

-Now teachers join oust-Mistry campaign, The Indian Express, Express Newslite, Vadodara

24 December 2002, MSU students hold 'Un-fair 02' as part of protest against Mistry, The Times of India, Ahmedabad

From 15-24 December, the In-charge Dean and Ex-Officiating Dean were lobbying and encouraging the students' for their 'rights' and 'freedom to protest' by appreciating their 'unity' to keep up their 'agitation'. Leading teachers from Art History, Painting and Graphics (Printmaking) used their kind of students. They were briefed for steering the daily meetings of the students. The meetings were reported to have continued in the boys' hostels till late night. The agitators were provided food and drinks. Some said that there was illicit liquor and drugs available 'to keep going'. One of the students had admitted after the meeting on the eve of 13 Dec that he was badly drunk in the meeting that morning as he was shouting and screaming uncharacteristically during the meeting on 13th. Involvement of nefarious characters was noticed to contain those who did not 'cooperate' as some had found it foul and protested. The leading teachers were confident that this will be over soon, if the students were 'united'. Some students sent email messages to their friends abroad that they were told that their presence was marked during the agitation and the absentees were to be scolded and punished. This was explained by a foreign scholar from Art History and also added that she had been sexually harassed by their Head of the Department. Attendance was taken at the main entrance, those who were unwilling to work for the 'Un-fair' were not allowed into the faculty. Not until early February, that some students would come to talk to me of their experiences and observations of the clandestine events that began from mid December 2002.

The agitation comprised of protest by students in the form of petitions, meetings, strike, posters, processions, effigy burning, staging of "Un-Fair" fair and memorandum by teachers to "oust-Mistry". Present and Ex. Professor and Head of Painting and an 'eminent' local painter (now dead) and his painter followers supported 'Unfair 2002', 'creative protest' by the students. They provided loan, cash and donation of work.

24 December 2002, Mistry controversy continues to dog MSU fine arts faculty, the Times of India, Ahmedabad

On 24 December 2002, the VC visited the Faculty to attend Students' Meeting in the morning. With support from the Faculty teachers, the only lecturer in Sculpture had done well in using students to create allegations and accusations of 'unfair' evaluation by the Head of Sculpture. Soon, the VC assured them of a fair assessment 'procedure'. The VC was apologetic for not being able to attend the 'Un-fair 2002' as it would have appeared quite 'unfair'. A group of students presented him with a mask made during 'Un-fair 2002'. He said that, 'he didn't know what it was, as he didn't understand art'. One of the sculpture students explained that, 'it was a mask of a lion'. The VC chuckled and said that, "he hoped that it was not symbolic of 'Dhruva Mistry!'" by accepting it. In less than five minutes he had declared the strike to be officially over and left the Faculty. Similar stories were told by those who had been observing the strange goings on of the Faculty.

Later on, I came across a page of a diary sent by one of the students, which is as follows:

"the I/C Dean had said that "it's good the student's should have the right to protest". there was a 5 min meeting in the auditorium this morning - the v.c FOX wizzed in & it was officially announced amidst hearty clapping that the strike is over as the student's requirement's are being fulfilled. he kept referring to the new I/C Dean the dean & assured everyone that they must stop getting upset by Mistry." forget him

now, we've heard enough of dhruva mistry" said one of the Dean's man, that "we need assurance that if he is made HOD he won't have any admstr powers" (this statement must have been prompted by the I/C Dean. fox said " i can't guarantee that but don't worry i don't think he wants to come back." he even said that " he hasn't even informed us where he's gone - he just vanished - if he had anything to do with the fac he would've taken our permission". the students at the end gave him a present for his cooperation & help. he apologised for not attending the fair because he can't show that he is with the agitation.(!) The I/C Dean was looking tense but pleased on the whole(he didn't look like he'd slept). One of the girl students demanded they have a right in deciding the new set of teachers to be appointed. fox & the I/C Dean looked agitated. Fox said that students should not be interfering in such matters but hay don't mind taking suggestions(!)her list of teachers included some young sculptors– but the I/C Dean cut her short & said u can inform me later. the rest of the sculp students (anti that female student) were furious....”

The VC, like Registrar or the I/C Dean and other teachers knew well that I had honored my termination notice. However, for months they were content to project that I had vanished to run away from them.

25 December 2002, Fine Arts strike over, No decision on Mistry, but V-C concedes demand on evaluation, The Indian Express, Express Newsline, Vadodara

On 27 December 2002, “No. ADM/1/664, (Through: the Dean, Fac. of Fine Arts), A letter from Dy. Registrar (ADE/ADM), conveyed decision of the Syndicate and requested me to reconsider my earlier decision and to continue as professor & Head, Deppt. of Sculpture.”

47 days after the end of my termination notice, the Syndicate resolved to request me to reconsider as Professor and Head of Sculpture after having used everyone to stage a number of events in the Faculty for the ‘oust Mistry’ campaign.

A senior teacher said that the teachers of the Faculty were called by the VC to end the agitation in the faculty on 28 December 2002.

On 30 December 2002 (R/ADM/535), The Registrar sent a letter printed on a plain paper that, “It had been brought to his knowledge of the university that I had not been attending the faculty of Fine Arts”, The Registrar of the MSU ought to know better than that. The letter was sent through a courier and received at home on 19 January 2002.

On 1 January 2003, the Registrar used the In-charge Dean by instructing him to stop my pay from Dec 2002 onwards, the passbook entry read, “Reverse entry of Rupees 22,270.00”

The VC inserted name of In-charge Dean in the University diary for 2003 by going against the norm of not mentioning any Officiating or In Charge Deans’ names. My name as Head and Prof. of Sculpture was printed but did not appear among the names of the teachers of the Departments.

15 February 2003, Convocation: time for lobbying, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewsline, Vadodara, reported that, “This syndicate elections marks end of an era in the M S University” said a retired teacher.

17 February 2003, Marking his words, Vadodara Diary, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewsline, Vadodara

21 February 2003, Syndicate poll heading for saffron show, Unofficial whip by BJP has taken feuding factions by surprise, In box news: Playing dirty, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewsline, Vadodara

22 February 2003, Saffron sweep at Syndicate election, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewsline, Vadodara -Anyhow, panel made successful through BJP leadership, BJP steamroller captures 13 out of 14 seats in the MSU Syndicate poll, In box news: BJP senators kept watch over voters for voting as per the BJP mandate, Sandesh, Vadodara

-Saffron syndicate at MS University, The Times of India, Ahmedabad

23 March 2003, Like an orphaned University, stunning acceptance of Pro V-C's resignation, Sandesh, Vadodara

-Departure of Pro V-C from the Uni. engulfed with controversies, politics that can tarnish the Uni. image,

Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

25 March 2003, Finally, Govt accepts pro V-C's resignation, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara

-MSU pro vice-chancellor's resignation raises eyebrows, MSU officials were surprised to receive a communiqué from the education department on Thursday which stated that pro V-C VD Pathak's resignation had been accepted, The Times of India, Ahmedabad

26 March 2003, Pro V-C's resignation still contentious issue, The Times of India, Ahmedabad

-Now Shah's nomination stirs up hornet's nest, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara

30 March 2003, Pandemonium at the MSU senate meet, The Times of India, Ahmedabad

-No decisions at Senate meet, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara

As advertised on 30 March 2003 in the Sunday Times of India, I wrote on 2 April 2003 to the Directors of grievances in Central Government Ministries/ Departments, Dy. Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Joint Secretary(PG) Ministry of Human Resource Development and Department of Secondary Education and Higher Education, and Joint Secretary Department Culture an e-mail with the copy of 90 Days Termination of my Professorship to the University and that the University has neither responded nor settled my account, despite timely communication and reminders since the end of my termination of official duty on 13 November 2002.

The Undersecretary to the Government of India Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment sent an Office Memorandum on 6 June 2003, marking it Most Immediate, Time Bound Case asked the Deptt. of Secondary & Higher Education requesting that, "Subject: Pension Discrimination, necessary action may please be taken directly as the subject-matter pertains to your Department." The copy of the letter was sent to me. I went on sending email reminders to the ministry on 13 June 2003, 14 July 2003, 19 Sept 2003. Each time I sent a copy of the reminder to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. I never heard from the Deptt. of Secondary & Higher Education. There was neither communication nor response from any other ministry.

From 21 April 2003, Selected External Experts for the Joint Board of Examination for the Faculty were sent a letter that during last May, as per the University's requirement, the Registrar was sent a report of the External Experts' and the Head and Dean. However, the University had not acted in the case of a Lecturer on an extended probation in Sculpture. The appointment was strictly conditional and the candidate remains ineligible to fulfill minimum qualifications as per the UGC norms. In the light of the above, it was time to review the role of an external expert, as I had to quit the M.S. University of Baroda. Those concerned and interested in the Higher Education in Fine Arts were also sent emails.

3 May, 2003, MSU turns its back on IIM Prof, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara (The Professor seemed to have expected a level of quality required for the PhD thesis for which he was invited as an expert. Later, the Syndicate was reported to have resolved to relieve him from his duties in the future!)

On 8 May 2003, Resignation of the Head of Graphics was accepted by the Syndicate and In Charge Dean was given the charge with an immediate effect. The In Charge Dean asked the Head to wait for a week and then asked him to hand over the charge to a Reader appointed in May 1999, who does not possess a minimum UG or a recognized PG Degree to be a Lecturer in Higher Education.

On 15 May 2003, the Selection Committee for the Temporary Teachers in Sculpture comprising In Charge Dean and a retired Head of Sculpture from Vadodara and an expert from Ahmedabad selected 3 teachers less 'qualified' than the ones who had left. The reservation post for SEBC category was kept vacant despite two Post Diploma candidates called for the interview, whose qualifications and experience is no less than the lecturer on an extra extended probation in Sculpture.

30 May 2003, What kind of administration at the MSU? For 365 days, the VC was away for 100 days!,

Sandesh, Vadodara

-Uni. administration has serious effect of the VC's frequent absence, numerous decisions unattended; the VC was away for 100 days in a year, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

The Head of Painting had moved out of the departmental staff room into the large PG level studio space; the floor above Mural section. This floor was meant to be an extension of the Mural section for an ever increasing shortage of space with kilns, equipments and students. Not until mid June 2003 that some students would wake up after declaration of the University Exams' result as they found themselves betrayed by their teachers with unfair assessment. Some students from Graphics were surprised that one of the students who gave a blank answer sheet and no tutorials in the class had secured 2nd class. When the student argued that he must be failed, he was told that, "he had to be passed." He was asked to submit his tutorials well after the Viva Voce i.e. completion of the MA Exam. An average student secured 190 out of 200 marks in an Art History subject and bagged the gold medal in Graphics who happened to be a girl friend of the assessing teacher's son. Students did not seem happy with a 10+5 student being admitted into MA course, the lack of minimum qualifications required for the Reader (made Head recently) in the Graphics was mentioned by his inability to teach apart from allegations of sexual harassment by a girl student.

1 July 2003, As opposed to other faculties, the students of Fine Arts and Home Science Faculties have no permission for reassessment at all, Sandesh, Vadodara

-MS University's tattered 17.52% result in F.Y.BSc., Sandesh, Vadodara

-Uni. Professors to stage Gherao and begin agitation from the 4th, Sandesh, Vadodara

20% students out of an intake of 80 from the Preparatory were declared failed, however some of the girls had managed to pass before the idea of 'reassessment' was printed by the news papers by 1st July 2003. Fine Arts, as a fulltime professional course had not such provision for decades like Arts or Commerce Faculties with large number of students.

2 July 2003, Students given assurance, Home Science and Fine Arts Faculties too will offer reassessment facility, Sandesh, Vadodara

3 July 2003, MSU eyes central status to end dependence on grants, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara, wrote,

"we have certain advantages which should be leveraged to our benefit. For example, we are the only university in the State having English as medium of instruction. Our academic structure is similar to the one in Banaras Hindu University, which being a central university has succeeded in keeping its regional links intact. We can also do that." said the MSU VC.

Those who might have read "Marking his words" about the Registrar in the Vadodara Diary of The Indian Express on 17 February 2003, Vadodara newline, p3, can understand that. It was written that, "MS University, takes pride in being the only University in Gujarat to impart college education entirely in English, will definitely not like to have this statistical record to its credit. Like past years, the Registrar's distinctive way of pronouncing certain words had the listeners in splits during the convocation. A classic illustration is the word centenary which he mispronounced as 'sanitary' and the royal Sayaji Maharaja became 'Siyaji Maharaja'. In fact, records maintained by a diligent Syndicate member reveal that the registrar had increased his score from 52 mispronunciations in last year's function to 71 this time."

One can understand the University's medium of instruction in English as he was pronouncing 'centenary' as 'sanitary' and 'faculty' as 'fekility' apart from other things in the convocation of the MSU.

5 July 2003, Teachers' assn observes dharna, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara

-MSU moots proposal for central university, The Times of India, Ahmedabad

Admissions for PG and Post Diploma in Sculpture were conducted by the Offg. Dean. 3 Temp Teachers prior to their appointment were on the selection panel. Extra 4 students, over the standard intake of 10 were admitted. Admissions' lists for Sculpture, Painting, Advertising Design and Printmaking were

finalized on 16 July 2003. Unlike last time, Painting and Printmaking conducted a written test.

On 11 July 2003, I was in receipt of a circular (ADE/TS-1/963 & 958) as Head of the Dept. of Sculpture to attend the Selection Committee Meeting on 18 July for Lecturer and Reader in Sculpture by the Registrar. By 16 July 2003(ADE/TS/1004), the Dy. Registrar (ADE/ADM) informed me through the Offg. Dean that both circulars 'sent in the name of Prof. Dhruva Mistry, Head, Dept. of Sculpture be treated as cancelled for the Selection Committee Meeting'. Eventually, they had selected 1 potter as a Lecturer from the 4 called for interview; 3 remained absent. Thus, Sculpture had 1 permanent lecturer out of 7 teachers. (*Soon, the lecturer was found harassing girl students and there were protests, procession, poster war and insults against him and the Dean. There was a committee to settle the matter. There were sufficient number of news reports that things are not well, yet, both continue with their job.*)

On 16 July 2003, Sculpture Students sent a petition to the VC, Registrar and the Offg. Dean to state that they refuse to accept presence of one and only ineligible lecturer left in the Department from 7 permanent teachers.

On 17 July 2003, students handed over a petition to the VC, Registrar, the Offg. Dean and Senate members of the Faculty, that there was a "need for solution for the problems faced by the Students of Sculpture in the Faculty".

15 Senate members, including some Govt. Nominees signed a request letter to the VC for an immediate action for Prof. Dhruva Mistry, Head of Sculpture Department & Dean as normal academic work on the Department and regularized functioning of the Faculty had been suffering since mid December 2002. It was handed over to the VC on 17 July 2002.

18 July 2003, Sculpture students want teacher, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara -Demand for expert teacher in Sculpture Deptt, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

18 July 2003, Atrocities in the Temp. Teaching Post in SEBC category in Sculpture, Faculty of Fine Arts, reminder-1 was given to the University authorities by the candidates.

19 July 2003, Sans teachers, budding sculptors are ultimate losers, Bottomline, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara -Injustice against reservation posts for teachers in Fine Arts, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara

On 1 August 2003 (their Ref: F.D-260/2001/NGMA Dated 14/05/2001), the Director of National Gallery of Modern Art was sent my resignation from the Advisory Committee of the NGMA as various central ministries and the University had failed to respond despite timely communication. It was futile to continue to be a member of the NGMA when fine arts, visual culture and higher education prove unworthy of importance. *There was no response from Director or others from the NGMA.*

On 2 August 2003, the Registrar sent a Show-Cause Notice (ADE/FOFA/DM/ 190 Dated 2-8-2003) by invoking Ordinance 200(24). Which he was responded on 7 Aug 2003 by stating that he had acted in flagrant ignorance of my lettered communication since 2 July 2002 and it was uncalled for and unwarranted. He was asked to provide the Syndicate resolution of the meeting held on 25 July 2003 which had prompted this action.

Strangely, students who had failed in Preparatory were promoted to 1st year specializations i.e. in Advertising Design, Painting and Sculpture. The University had sanctioned intake of Preparatory by 5 more seats. Hence, the prescribed intake of 80 students was raised to 85 in Studio Practice of Fine Arts.

12 August 2003, Dhruva Mistry quits NGMA post, spat with MSU makes him resign from NGMA's advisory committee, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewline, Vadodara, p1. -The Gujarat Samachar and Sandesh both Gujarati dailies, reported the news on 11th and 13th August 2003.

On 13 August 2003, I wrote to the Registrar to specifically request him to kindly let me know what the University authority had conclusively decided in the matter of my 90 Days Termination Notice of

Professorship in Sculpture.

19 August 2003, Straight Answers, Dhruva Mistry, The Vadodara Times of India, Vadodara

Office of the Secretary to the Governor of Gujarat (No.GS.XI/431L/2003 of 27 Dec 2003) wrote to me that my receipt of the 90 Days Termination Notice of Professorship in Sculpture, Faculty of Fine Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda was acknowledged and the Registrar was forwarded the same for suitable necessary action.

On 30 September 2003, The Syndicate accepted 'resignation of Prof. Dhruva Mistry as Professor of Sculpture, Faculty of Fine Arts with reference to my letter or 90 Days Termination Notice of 13 Aug 2002.

The In-charge Dean was made Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts and the ineligible Reader in Print making without recognized Post Graduate Degree was 'confirmed' as Head of the Department. It is crucial that the teachers be proficient in theory of the subject as it is inconceivable to expect them to teach what they have not studied as required.

"In one more decision, professor Dhruva Mistry of Faculty of Fine Arts, was today completely relieved from all services of the University by the syndicate." was reported in the "MSU syndicate sets up fact-finding committees" said The Indian Express, , Vadodaranewsline, Vadodara on 1 October 2003.

4 October 2003, Following resignation of Prof. V.D. Pathak, the post of Pro Vice Chancellor of the M.S. Uni. remains empty for last 6 months, Sandesh, Vadodara, p7

Syndicate agenda of 6 October 2003, item no. 32 signed by Registrar wrote the following:

"Consideration of reply dated . 13-8-2003 from Prof. Dhruva Mistry in response to the Show-Cause-Notice issued to him as per S.R.No. 58 of 25-7-03. (Appendix 30)(ADE) "RESOLVED that the letters dated 10-8-2003 and 13-8-2002 received from Prof. Dhruva Mistry are accepted and accordingly the resignation of Prof. Dhruva Mistry as a Professor of Sculpture, Faculty of Fine Arts is accepted w.e.f. 12-11-2002 a.o.h. considering 3 months notice from 13-8-2002 as per the rules."

9 Oct 2003, University loses place in elite club, The Indian Express, Vadodaranewsline, Vadodara

On 20 October 2003, The Dean was informed by the I/C Registrar to take further action in the above matter (ADE/TS-1/1854) as per S.R.No.32 of the Syndicate meeting of 30 September 2003.

21 Oct 2003, Student drags MSU to court in copying case, The Times of India, Ahmedabad

23 Oct 2003, MSU now a pale shadow of its glorious past, TheTimes of India, Ahmedabad

24 Oct 2003, Is focus on locals killing MSU's national character? TheTimes of India, Ahmedabad

25 Oct 2003, 'Depoliticise MSU, bring in competition, end inbreeding', TheTimes of India, Ahmedabad

Thus, endemic maladministration of the M. S. University accepted my charges for failing to respond to my 90 Days Termination Notice of my Professorship before 12 Nov 2002. The issues were establishment matters, ineligible appointments of teachers, academic malfunction, unfinished accounts and the Old Building after one year by resolving to accept my Termination Notice as a Professor, Head and the Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts. If the Governor of Gujarat had not reminded the Registrar about my 90 days termination notice, the authorities conspired to 'use' the Syndicate to terminate my service on the pretext of my 'prolonged absence'.

On 7 Nov 2003, I wrote to the Registrar that the Vice Chancellor about their dubious role in regard with their clandestine operation to remove me as the Dean well after the end of my termination notice and that they were accountable for having caused intentional harm through their orchestrated defamation of my personal and professional career as they continued my lien over the next year till 30 Sept 2003. The Governor and others were informed about my communication with the University.

The Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts sent a 'reliving letter' on 28 Nov 2003.

Thus, the University and Faculty fail to maintain 'minimum standards of maintenance' and 'qualifications for teachers' through interference led by the colors of political ideology. It seemed that sitting pretty was the flavor of the new era in the Higher Education.

2 Jan 2004, Vajpayee says no to MSU honour, The Indian Express, Vadodanewsline, Vadodara -Anticlimax to MSU honorary degree controversy, Vajpayee turns down degree offer, Lata Mangleshkar and Mashelkar not to attend convocation, TheTimes of India, Ahmedabad

Now, the students knew ways of exercising 'freedom of expression' and their 'right to protest'. One could learn from the local press that one of the girls from Painting had alleged that a newly recruited Lecturer in Pottery (Sculpture) had been making advances as a case of 'sexual' harassment during an Optional subject of 'Pottery'. The student seemed to have failed to resolve the matter at the departmental and Faculty level and that led to an eventual agitation. They repeated various techniques of protests their own teachers had taught them in the earlier instance. Now, the only eligible lecturer in question remains well supported by the Dean/In Charge Head of Sculpture as well as the authorities. The painting students' well rehearsed sequence of protest, procession and poster campaign beefed up with personal and physical insult and abuse against the Lecturer in Pottery and the Dean led to nothing. The local news papers had a colorful dig for a few months. As expected, the VC was quick to set up committees to look into the matter. For over a year the issue has gone silent. Some students found the teachers involved to be 'crass' and 'immune'. The 'experienced' teachers knew how to manage youthful rebellion by dragging the matter till the impending annual exams. For many, to leave the Faculty, preferably with a good grade in their studies seemed to be much more practical than make enemies with those who could endanger their future while fighting deaf ears. Many students came to realize that thick skin and double standards of their mentors had turned to be their tormentors.

In December 2004, to the surprise of a Sculpture student, the Painting Professor (former Head of the Department) who bumped into her in the faculty campus aired unusual sadness with pain by saying that, 'the Faculty had really gone down as 'she' had seen it in its best days. She added that, 'She hardly attended the college anymore.' The student felt taken aback by an unexpected burst of acceptance of the goings on. To the puzzlement of the student, the Professor added that, "it was not because of 'her' or her 'husband' (Reader and former Head of Printmaking who was an Officiating Dean)."

On a late summer day in 1989, well past midnight and early midmorning, during an unusually chatty session as he was alone at home, the *Officiating Dean* had told me his terms of 'Deanship' was spent with difficulty while making his spouse, a Lecturer in Print Making a 'Professor of Painting'. It had taken six long years. Later on, the new professor once told me that the teachers in painting had threatened to 'resign en masse' in 'protest' of her appointment.

Now, the Reader in Painting had taken over the Headship from a sitting Professor who had missed her legitimate claim of Deanship as a sitting Head of the Department. Instead, the Ex Head of Art History, appointed Professor in 2001 was made an In-Charge before being appointed as the Dean.

"It is strange that despite the Senate and Syndicate in 'his'(the VC's) favour, there is no respite from the stories of administrative incompetence", said one of the former Vice Chancellors in a social gathering.

In early January 2005, I visited the faculty to deliver invitation for my exhibition to my friends. An artist with a privileged background of an illustrious patronage for the arts and culture in the city offering voluntary attendance to instruct students for their Life Drawing, disdainfully told me that one of the Sr. Lecturers in Painting had told him that, 'there was no such thing as 'Composition' which is an important part of their curriculum. The teacher in question has studied abroad for an M.A. for two years after his diploma in Painting, and said that, 'From Navaratri onwards (Garba Dance Festival of nine nights, mid to late October) there was 'no work' done in the Painting".

Recently, the University Grants Commission rejected the M S University's application for granting it the status of a Central University as it failed to meet the criteria of required quality.

29 January 2005, V-C search: BBA(Baroda Bar Council) chief threatens to file PIL, *The Indian Express, Vadodaranewslines, Vadodara*, “for failing to follow Government of Gujarat’s amendment in the university norms stating that all members of any statutory or non-statutory body associated with universities should be below 62 years of age. However all the members of the current search committee are over 62... The Registrar of the MSU, A V Gupta, who is also the Secretary of the committee, was confident of the selection. “There is no such rule applicable to the MSU”, said A V Gupta.” The Vice Chancellor, who had told me on 9 November 2002 that, “he did not know the PVC, the Syndicate member present, the former Officiating Dean, the Dean of Fine Arts and others. He had nothing to do with them and none of the problems were created by him. His six months had passed and he had next two and a half years to go.” Many believed that he had tried to fix an extension of his tenure.

I could neither fancy ‘passing time’ like the Vice Chancellor, Registrar and his supporters nor sold stories of ‘passion for teaching’ to manipulate impressionable young minds or maneuver unsuspecting teachers by claiming ‘years of experience’. Since spring 2002, many have come to learn of an unabated deterioration of my alma mater as a result of power politics by overlooking the M.S. University’s Statutes and the State Government’s legislation meant to maintain the ‘minimum standards of maintenance’.

31 March 2005, *Protests, controversies mark MSU’s annual senate meet, The Times of India, Ahmedabad*
3 March 2005, *Are lakhs missing from MSU coffers? The varsity accounts for 2003-04 are ready but no official to sign the dotted line, The Indian Express, The Times of India, Ahmedabad*

15 April 2005, *MSU V-C’s exit mired in controversy, Vadodaranewslines, The Indian Express, Vadodara*
16 April 2005, *members livid as MSU meet ends in 20 minutes, Syndicate submits application to registrar seeking to hold the benefits due to V-C, Vadodaranewslines, The Indian Express Vadodara*

- *MSU syndicate embarrasses outgoing vice-chancellor, The Times of India, Ahmedabad*

16 April 2005, *If state Government refuses to pay, V-C asked to give a bond for PF and other benefits, Sandesh, Vadodara*

- *Without offering reasonable explanation the V-C abruptly leaves syndicate meet!! Sandesh, Vadodara*

16 April 2005, *V-C’s last meet marred by ugly scenes, adjourns the syndicate and walks out, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara*

- *V-C’s last syndicate marred by allegations instead of farewell; irregularities in computer purchase would make V-C the prime accused, a stormy meet, Gujarat Samachar, Vadodara*

16 April 2005, *Outgoing V-C soured, in 20 minutes adjourned syndicate meet and ran away, syndicate resolve to forfeit PF money from the V-C, Divyabhasker, Vadodara*

17 April 2005, *Matter of fate and luck, one and a half years ago Dr. Soni had applied for professorship, stalled procedures for professorship are like a boon for Manoj Soni, Divyabhasker, Vadodara*

17 April 2005, *MSU stunned by 39-year-old V-C, The Times of India, Ahmedabad*

- *MSU V-C Manoj Soni: Dark-horse turns steed overnight, The Times of India, Ahmedabad*

18 April 2005, *Did an article swing the scale in Soni’s favour? Outgoing V-C has only one regret, Central varsity file gathered dust, regrets Upadhyaya, Vadodaranewslines, The Indian Express Vadodara*

- *M.S.(Manoj Soni)University Ltd., Divyabhasker, Vadodara*

21 April 2005, *K.C. Upadhyaya legalized Illegal Commerce admissions, couldn’t wait for search committee’s report? Sandesh, Vadodara*

As alumni of the MSU, I feel obliged to take note of my observations for those who care for an equitable future for the quality of Higher Education in an only ‘English’ medium University of Gujarat.

Revised April 2005