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**STRUCTURING THE PATTERN OF POWER STRUGGLE IN K.L.KAMAL'S
*CAMPUS: A NOVEL***

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Abstract: Power in itself is not a new concept; it is as older as our civilization. Power is the subject of study as its pattern is dubious. In the present day, one can easily witness a lot of power chaos in the academy's atmosphere. It demeans the institution's glory, and influences lot the learners' lives that are the future pillars of the nation. K.L.Kamal's *Campus: A Novel* deals with the political hegemony and exploitation scene of the academy atmosphere. The presented novel has sketched the agony of the Vice-Chancellor who has witnessed and suffered in power game despite having power in his hands. The power and ideology get a clear depiction under the observing body of the text. The presented paper will also try to analyze the concept of power and hegemony used and analyzed by the academicians. The presented paper will try to catch all the power points and roles of academia by analyzing the text in its most total form.

Keywords: Power, Civilization, Academy, Hegemony, Institution, Chaos, Glory

Today power has become an essential part of the institution and its attributes. Power, with its all variances, affected a lot of the learning pattern and the system. It has become a prevailing tool that glorifies and vilifies the dignity and glory of academia. The presented paper will try to analyze the

power scene given by K. L. Kamal in his novel *Campus: A Novel*. The novel sketched in great detail the life and sufferings of a Vice-Chancellor, Chandrakant. His sincerity for the duty and the functioning of the Universities in his times are described with a wider detail.

The plot of the novel revolves around Chandrakant, the Vice-Chancellor, the protagonist of the novel. Irony delves deep in the working of the power leg. Chandrakant wants to high his university to the level of a prestigious glory of National University in his tenure ship and to raise the level of higher education by updating and introducing new systematic diploma courses and to create a developed research atmosphere in the academy, which leads a lot of chaos in his life because all other were against him and his thoughts. Chandrakant felt disheartened by the gheraos, strikes, slogan shouting, burning of his effigies, and many threats to resign from the post and also pressured by a politician to not follow the correct procedures to favour his favourite candidate. He gains inspiration and energy from great sayings and philosophies. His confidence is also getting a boost from a student, Padmini. He continued to serve his post without any biases. Finally, after two years of his struggle and dutifulness, all the people against him understood his worth and started giving favour and respect to him.

Michel Foucault, a power theoretician, discusses a lot about power ideology. According to him, the power persists in a unique and circular pattern to influence the hierarchy. Power in itself is a structure with a complex pattern of study and influences all the surroundings of society. Foucault writes, "Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault 52). By observing the pattern of the hegemony of power and position, Foucault states that discipline is a type of power, a modality to set things in order; it is an anatomy of power that influences the decorum and culture of the academics. The current situation of degradation for power and position is the decaying part of the disciplinary criticism of the day. Foucault observes, "We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social-worker-judge; it is one them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his

body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements" (Foucault 73).

True to its title, the novel completely explores the realistic incidents on the campus of a university. The novel gives an insight into the difficulties and agitations faced by the person who himself is a reputed person, the Vice-Chancellor, the post which is rather considered very dignified by many. But in actuality, it is presented as painful as a crown of thorns. In Chandrakant's opinion, "They can accept an IAS officer or an ex-army official as their Vice-Chancellor, but not so one from among their fraternity" (P 51). Chandrakant is an intellectual person who wishes to advance his university on a high level. All his moves towards progress are bannered by the people on the campus who are against his progressive thoughts. His main antis are two persons – Roopchand and Pramod Kumar, who are faculty members who just play the game of politics rather than teaching. Chandrakant describes them as:

These weren't teachers at all but often behaved like trade

union leaders and would stoop to any extent for self-aggrandizement...They are opportunists and given to consumerism, working with destructive ideas... both were averse to taking classes but not to the gains and prerogatives their position entailed. They are the symbols of moral deterioration and social disintegration of an institution. (P 7-8)

Their one-point agenda is out the Vice-Chancellor from his post. To fulfil their demeaning desires, they even instigate students against the Vice-Chancellor. To quote their slogans, the novelist ironically writes, "Without a few doors and windows broken, the V.C. will pay you no heed, he is a stubborn kind of a man. On the surface he appears to be sweet, but it's all poison inside!" (P22). Pramod Kumar and Roopchand even give more harsh slogans to the students. The students shout at standing on Vice-Chancellor's gate in a very loud voice, "VC come out. Come out." Some students whispered, "Why don't you

use the slogans suggested by Pramod Kumar?" The slogans started changing, "V.C. step down. We will not tolerate such dictatorship! Not at all! Not at all!"(P 21). This scene in itself presents the chaos of the campus. How the image of the temple of learning is getting polluted is described in the body of the novel. About these types of people, Chandrakant's opinion is quoted here:

In any institution or society, where there is a dearth of work culture and moral values, the likes of them naturally gain ascendancy...Their increasing numbers is also an indication of the fact that even in the temples of learning, of the Goddess Saraswati, the demons of consumerism are gaining sway and tarnishing the sacred image. An immediate herculean effort needs to be mounted to curb their encroachment and nip this forest fire in the bud. (P 7-8)

One of the catching features of the novel is the repetition of slogan shouting and the gheraos by students,

teachers and even the non-teaching staff for their unlawful demands. They try to put pressure on Vice-Chancellor so that their demands get easily by any means. There is a scene of the adhoc teachers who were appointed through the rules of Court orders but pressurized the V.C. through gheraos to regularize their jobs. It was an uncivil act that could not be expected from the teachers. Some permanent teachers of the college also join their gherao because they need the votes and support from them for the upcoming temporary teacher's elections. This shows how political today's human beings, even in the field of learning, are. They just help others and stand with them only if something favourable happens to them in return. Chandrakant realizes their selfish and unlawful behaviour and sadly says that, "Whomsoever he came in contact with pretended to be his well-wisher but within a few minutes it would be clear that the other had some favour to ask and that too at the cost of the third person"(P 16).

Knowledge is part of our life that comes from human nature. Foucault believes that the archaeology

of our thought mends our behaviour and the human psyche reflects all the nature and belief of the human workings and institution is also part of it. Foucault observes, "Knowledge doesn't really form part of human nature. Conflict, combat, the outcome of the combat, and, consequently, risk and chance are what gives rise to knowledge. Knowledge is not instinctive; it is counter instinctive, just as it is not natural but counter natural" (Foucault 79). So it can be said that the happening of the campus is affected by the power ideologies. The bitter scene comes with the selection process when the process for the professorship is to start the shrewd candidates' tries to come closer to the Vice-Chancellor for his favour to select them. Chandrakant feels astonishingly these very people had never missed any chance to abuse him and hit him back at him for their personal gains. This scene is ironic in itself. It depicts the selfish and shrewd behaviour of the faculty members, which do not suit their post, not their personalities.

When one of the Syndicate members had generalized a notice that he is going to bring a no-confidence

motion against Chandrakant, Sandeep Gupta, a faculty member who was dear of Chandrakant and who had been made a Syndicate member by the Vice-Chancellor himself, had signed the motion against him and also Basant Kumar, a rival of Chandrakant whom he had made Principal of a college joins hand with them to nail the Vice-Chancellor down. Chandrakant feels, "All principles fail to justify the actions of these men. They grow annoyed if a favour or two is not granted to them even though a good ninety percent of their demands are always met"(P 29). Chandrakant is struck in an exploited situation where some of the students, faculty and even the higher authorities in the government blame him without doing any ill to them and to the university as well. The students' political parties like- ABVP and NSUI accuse Chandrakant of belonging to the other political party. This conversation between groups of students depicts how politics has become a part of even in a learning institution. The students utter:

You know this V.C. is playing a double game. He pretends to belong to the Congress Party,

but in reality, he is a BJP man! An instant repartee came from the NSUI camp: Don't forget, it is our rule, the government is ours. The V.C. has been appointed by a Congress government. He will have to follow our dictates or...

The ABVP group counter-argued loudly:

Remember, the government does not appoint a V.C., it is the Governor who does it, and the Governor in turn is appointed by the Central Government. And, there, the BJP is heading the country. (P 04-05)

Every university is an autonomous body, and one should not bring any political party into its work. There is no need for these types of political references and parties in the campus atmosphere. All it will do is to tarnish the image of the temple of learning. The novels ironically advance the political bearing by saying that the faculty members are also divided into two – the ones who are the chosen representatives of the teacher's community and the others who are led

by Pramod Kumar and Roopchand for political and positional means. Apart from these groups, the non-teaching staffs have also their own group to carry their every demand. All of these groups have their own list of illogical demands. As the Vice-Chancellor states, "Whoever comes here, comes with a charter of demands, it seems that the university machinery has become merely a place to fight for rights not to do one's duty" (P 28). This scene depicts the picture of prevailing selfishness in the arena of the institution.

The non-teaching staffs raise their voice to increase their overtime allowance. For their immediate promotion and arrangement for their tight security against students on strike, LTC is at par with the Central Government employees and many other demands. One group of teachers demands the pay off arrears on an urgent basis which are due. Another group of teachers led by Chandrakant's rivals Pramod Kumar and Roopchand demand that the present union be dissolved until the next elections are held. Along with them, the group of students demand the withdrawal of the

proposal of fee-increase and exemption of students from 75% compulsory attendance and many other demands.

All these groups put pressure on the Vice-Chancellor by going to the extent of threatening the Vice-Chancellor that if he gave a deaf ear to their demands, what they would do. The non-teaching staff members announce that if their needs are not fulfilled, they will launch an indefinite strike and hunger strike, and the examination results would be delayed to a broader extent. Just like the students, the groups of faculty members accuse Chandrakant of working under the pressure of the other groups. They threateningly say:

You cannot work under the pressure of the opposition groups. We are the chosen representatives of the teachers' community, and they are with us on this matter. We will not tolerate that you work according to the wishes of those handfuls of people who do not have the backing of the teachers. If our demands are not met within seven days we will

boycott the classes and begin a non-cooperation movement. (P 24)

Once the Students' Union President enters the V.C.'s chamber with some of his associates and presents a picture of the presence of ill manner in academia. He considers his position a very high one and does not want to give respect to the Vice-Chancellor. Even in front of the V.C., none of them has even an iota of discipline, politeness, courtesy or patience on their faces. They just want to demonstrate their power to put pressure. The Union President bitterly says, "The Union President's post is a very high one, second only to the Vice-Chancellor's... I want my work done till tomorrow, mind you, or it will not be good for you! You will have to forget this chair. Only he who abides by the President's wishes can keep his chair intact" (P 14). There is a scene of power abuse; when the selection process for a professorship was begun in the university, there were a lot of non-eligible people to gain professorship by forcing the Vice-Chancellor.

Nobody has a tinge of discipline and respect, whether they are students,

teachers, non-teaching staff all directly pressurize the Vice-Chancellor and come to his office with their charter of demands. The novel ironically witness gheraos, quarrels, power games and strikes as part of the V.C.'s daily life. Every day he faces at least two to three protests unwillingly. Chandrakant says that "One group had demands related to the Controller of Exams and the other with the chief warden. They had no reason to come to him, but all officers advise them to meet the V.C. for even small demands in order to relieve themselves of the trouble of taking a decision" (P 46).

The V.C. is torn among all these groups and used to live in a pressurized atmosphere. He knows the truth and functions of the universities. Chandrakant knows that, "If the administrator listens to the Unions, he would be violating the MOU – the understanding signed with the government. The government would then stop the block grant and it would be difficult for the university to pay the salaries of its employees" (P 61). The pain and struggle continue to haunt and torture him day by day. Vice-Chancellor's indictment is described in

the following words, "...he had been pushed into such deep waters whose banks he knew not and neither their depth; that he was being buffeted whither the winds blew, unable to swim" (P 16).

To make a solution for all these problems, Chandrakant had to work ceaselessly 15 hours in a day with endless pressure and tensions. Even after putting in a lot of hard work he is devoid of the mental peace and inner peace deserved by a hard worker in result. Every morning Chandrakant wakes up with a resolution to do something new and good, something positive, but before the evening new cactus-like difficulties come and pose themselves before him. This is just one side of Chandrakant's problem. The other part is that he is hindered by many important persons in authority for their own benefits. The novel here correlates a view to Frantz Fanon's belief that, "Everything can be explained to the people, on the single condition that you want them to understand" (Fanon 53). In a scene, Chandrakant is sketched as pressurized by one of the political people to favour a person who

belonged to his own caste. When Chandrakant denies the help, he is badly criticized by him. The pitiful condition of Chandrakant's life is described in these words:

Chandrakant felt that holiday or no holiday, his days were bound to be disturbed. Everyone, the President, the Prime Minister, the Governors, the Chief Ministers all go on holidays, go with their families to...enchanted tourist locations except for the Vice-Chancellor, he has no holidays. Others are accompanied by friends, but it is not talked of, but if anyone visits the V.C., it becomes the gossip of the day. Has the V.C. no life of his own, no right to friends? (P 47)

With his hard determination, Chandrakant manages to put up with all the tensions and problems and tries to cope with them with the help of moral inspiration. He is so severely engrossed in the ceaseless duty that he neither gets time to spend with his family members nor to enjoy the nature in his surroundings. After

assuming the position of V.C. his life has only filled up with worries and pressures. His own colleagues make his life dubious. One of the Syndicate members, Shaitan Singh tries to put pressure on him to resign from his post. He provokes V.C. that he will pass a no-confidence motion against him. These types of harassment become a daily part of Chandrakant's life. By adding more irony, Shaitan Singh goes on to say that:

I have already got the signatures of eight other members and have spoken to many important dignitaries. The Education Minister is also angry with you, and neither is the Chief Minister happy. The Governor, too, will not support you. There is no alternative except to step down from your Vice-Chancellorship. I advise you to resign before the next Syndicate meeting, or you will have to face dire consequences. (P 48)

Lost in these severe harassments, Chandrakant's mental situation is sketched here in a very rigorous line, ".....sometimes elated,

sometimes depressed, Chandrakant strolled in the lawns of the V.C. lodge oscillating between hope and despair" (P 67). When Chandrakant joined the power of Vice- Chancellorship, He had brought with him some idealisms and visions that he would change the direction and decorum of the university. The novelist writes it thus:

The university dignity became his dignity. A new dream flowered within him, to upgrade this institution to the status of a National University, to raise the level of higher education, give it a research-conducive atmosphere, a disciplined character. But within a month, he had realized that this was a crown of thorns, perhaps not a crown at all, only thorns. (P 15-16)

Despite all tensions and conflicts, he never thought to resign from the post. The real fact is that the happenings in academia greatly torment him, but he regains strength and power from the religious scriptures. He feels that he is in the field of warlike Arjuna, fighting for the

righteousness of his university. But he is an Arjuna with no Lord Krishna on his side. However, later he feels that though he does not have Krishna beside him, he can derive morality, power, strength and support from Krishna's preaching. Chandrakant often recites shlokas from Bhagavad Gita to boost his personality and thoughts- "Oh Arjun, don't be beset with ideas of improwess. This does not behove you. Caste aside the weakness of a petty mind and prepare for war!"(P 55). Being a moral person, he is deeply inspired by Lord Krishna's words. "If you do not go forward in this war of duty, you would lose not only your religion and your glory but be steeped in sin" (P 83). Chandrakant never allows himself to kneel down before the mishappenings. He faces all the whirlwinds for the glory of his university. His strong positive power and highly inspirational spirit help him to prepare himself for appalling situations. He also gets compliments from a student, Padmini. She appreciates his all efforts. Chandrakant feels sorry for the faculty when nobody listen him:

Why should the University Officers and employees listen to him? They know that no one can harm them, they cannot be transferred and no confidential report is sent about their work. Moreover, they have a powerful union backing them and the union frequently threatens that the employees would go on a strike or follow a work-to-rule procedure. (P 61)

After two long years of his struggles, people near him understand his worth. They encounter the principles and far-sighted decision of Vice-Chancellor's dreams and aims. Some started switching on his side as a move to support. Chandrakant finds it positive and thinks that these changes will lead the light with all brightness, and he should not take much tension for future. Fromm supports from all sides, Chandrakant begins to launch new courses to upgrade the standards of education. Roopchand and Dwivedi discuss the realistic academic working and help him come out of his expectation of a utopian world of university and get encounter with the

realistic situations. Dwivedi asks him obvious and rhetorical questions:

Is the university culture not affected by these materialistic and destructive forces? Are the inmates of the university not a part of this very society?... When those who are the lawmakers and law keepers are themselves the lawbreakers, who can be the role model for the youth of today? When such is the state of affairs- general decadence- why should we have expectations from the universities alone?. (P 88)

Dwivedi asserts his argument too by providing a real aspect of academic atmosphere, "Mr. Vice-Chancellor, you are envisioning a utopia! How can the university remain unaffected by what is happening in the country? I can even then, say with confidence that the truthfulness, dedication and integrity found in university is nowhere else to be found" (P 88).

After this realistic discussion with the two Chandrakant comes to understand the real-life scenario of the

present universities and comes to a general assent that he must be a realist. He ultimately decides upon doing everything that will be possible from his side for the betterment of the society and academy as well.

The novel purely sketches the political tenure and its ill effects on academia. The novelist carries the aim to highlight the power issues to force the general reader to ponder over the current happenings of the academic atmosphere. The novel assimilates Antonio Gramsci's saying that, "The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born; now is the time of monsters" (Gramsci 99). The paper clearly finds the ill uses of power hands in institutions. We are now in need of harmony to balance the ethics and decorum of the institutions. Power is not a new concept. It is as old as our civilization. But now, the deep degradation just for personal profit and position is ruining the piousness of the temple of learning.

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