

If there is anything which distinguishes the city of Delhi other metropolises, it is the power of the name- when DDA comes to demolish the extra room of my ex-neighbour, a retired bureaucrat, all it takes for the bulldozers to turn back is the threat of calling up the Prime Minister's Office or the Vice Chairman, DDA. Similarly, when the residents complain about a blatantly illegal borewell being constructed by my neighbour, whose house proudly displays the flag of the ruling party, the police certainly come promptly. But one mention of calling up the local M.P. who is obviously a "close" friend, is enough for the police to immediately remember niceties like written complaints, procedures before any action can be taken etc.!

All this is common place. But what I recently witnessed at my vet's clinic took my breath away- and I am a hardened dilliwala who has seen power flow from the dropping of names! We had gone to get our dog vaccinated to our vet's clinic. As usual we had to wait for our turn. Now this is not as easy as waiting at your neighborhood's GP's clinic. In the small waiting room, there are dogs of all sizes and temperaments- some scared and docile while others scared and aggressive. Controlling our little dog is always an experience, especially when dogs, almost thrice his size are literally within biting distance!

As it turned out that day, there were about 4 of us "parents" waiting with their "wards" at the clinic. Ordinarily, it takes about 10-15 minutes before one gets to see the vet. But on this day, there was a lady inside the vet's room with her maidservant and a tiny poodle. One could see through the glass, that the doctor was finished with the dog but the lady kept on arguing on some issue. This went on for about 25 minutes.

By this time, everyone in the waiting room was losing patience. But there was precious little we could do since courtesy demanded that one doesn't disturb the doctor while he is with another patient- the others just have to be patient! I decided to be discourteous and gently knocked on the glass to make the doctor aware of us poor souls. To my surprise, the doctor looked immensely relieved and within a few minutes, the lady was out, together with her entourage and several fancy "dog" products.

When my turn came, I started with apologizing profusely to the doctor for being rude. To my surprise, he actually thanked me for saving him! It turns out that the lady got her poodle treated and bought several products and asked for the bill. On hearing the amount, she expressed surprise and disgust in turns. Now, one doesn't argue with a doctor or a lawyer over his fees in polite society. But clearly, this lady was made of sterner stuff and demanded a hefty discount. The vet was clearly taken aback and gently tried to tell her that this was not done.

The lady, then went into the dilliwala mode and without blinking an eyelid, told the doctor that the poodle belonged to the Ms. So and so. Now Ms. So and so is

not some politician or a bureaucrat or a police person- she happens to be the pioneer of one of the most lucrative industries of our times, the weight loss industry! This was a new one on me and all I could imagine next was that this goddess of anorexics, who must have made millions improving the self-esteem of thousands of people, would be demanding a discount from the sabziwala. Obviously, the sabziwala should feel grateful that such an eminent personality is patronizing him! It is not only the bureaucrats and the politicians which now demand respect in this city-the entrepreneurs are not far behind! We are truly globalizing!