

A Few Pages From My Diary

Ravi Pratap Singh



15th March 2013, Friday:

It started as a normal day - I did not have the least idea that it would turn out to be a day full of emotional happenings. Of course, I was prepared for one incident – Neelam was to leave school because she was getting married and today was her last day in the school. As far as the second incident is concerned, though I had a clue about it and had shared it with Monu Sir the previous day, I never thought it would happen so soon. According to me it would probably take place after one year or so. But it was not so.

The school started as usual. The children of my grade two presented a dance and a song. The classes started after a fun -filled quiz session. I had a grade 2 mathematics class in the first period and went to grade 3 in the second period. Within ten minutes of starting my teaching, I saw Aditya's mother coming in. Suddenly I felt very strange- a tremor of fear, like the fear of getting an examination result, crept up slowly as I saw her coming.

I came out of the classroom and met her in the veranda and before she could say anything I said, 'I was going to call you, Aditya has not been coming to school for the past two days.' Whatever she answered at that moment just did not register in my mind. I do not know whether my ears did not hear it properly or whether my mind was not ready to accept it. Suddenly it was like my heart had taken over my ears and mind. I felt like someone had pulled the rug out from under my feet or someone had suddenly pushed me into a pit a thousand feet deep. I could understand just one thing that she had come to take Aditya's transfer certificate because his grandfather was angry and had admitted him. I tried to pull myself together and told her that I would call her in the evening and let her know when she could collect the transfer certificate.

There is nothing unusual about a child leaving school nor is it a new experience in the life of a teacher. But something about this incident made me want to put it in writing. Nothing was unusual - not the request made by Aditya's mother, nor my reaction...but Aditya? He was definitely an extraordinary child and it is very important for me

to say something about him.

My Aditya is about 10 years old child, studying in grade 2. Fairly healthy, slightly chubby face, loose pants, ineffective belt, restless shirt eager to come out of the pants and a habit of looking at things with wrinkled nose and half -closed eyes. Though Aditya lived in our world, did not much care for it. He was happy in his own little world, unless we tried to interfere. He had his own sweet world full of vehicles, roads, traffic, police, army, helicopter, chief minister, India-Pakistan, Delhi, petrol pump, rally, flag, cycle, bridge, tunnel and many other things. He would enter the school, keep the bag near the door of his classroom and run from one end of the ground to other either chasing a car or taking a car backwards or caught in a traffic jam. Aditya was well-known for these activities by the entire school and the Foundation. We would be surprised at his knowledge about the transportation in the hilly areas. I have not seen such an imaginative child in my life till date. His wonderful drawing skill was icing on the cake. He would draw a helicopter, a long queue of cars caught in a traffic jam, a traffic police organising them, his own car, an ambulance, a boy cycling to school and many such things on an A4 sheet of paper. Every inch of paper would be used up. All these things would be in their proper place with a logical story and my – our- Aditya would be very eager to tell that story.

I had known him for one year now and I would give him every possible opportunity to draw when I realised that he was interested in drawing. I let him draw and tell stories whenever he wanted to. At times, I have felt that I am not a suitable teacher for Aditya. In addition to drawing he was always ahead, bold, truthful and honest. We would say that our lesson plans are successful because of Aditya.

There are many stories I could relate about him from the time I have known him but there are limitations to writing. Just a few days ago during lunch break he came running to me holding his pants with one hand and carrying a frame of a broken headlight in the other and said, 'Sir, these people are snatching it from me, please keep it carefully.' I washed it and kept it on the roof of the toilet. He kept on watching

till he was sure that it was safe.

When I had spoken to his mother in the last Parent-Teacher Meeting, she told me that he was her only son and she was concerned about him – he should not lag behind. I tried my best to reassure her and told her about all the special qualities of her son and showed his subject-wise report to her. But she was firm with the ideas of instructions in English medium, discipline and fear of teacher in her child.

Today, after listening to her decision though I feel sorry for her, I am angry with so-called educated and sensible parents. I am terribly sad for Aditya. It is possible that he may do everything that his parents want him to do, but perhaps he will not be able to do what he is interested in or what he wants to do. A passionate and matchless artist will be sacrificed under the loads of books and hardships of life. Through no fault of his, the biggest loser will be the child himself. And I am so helpless that I cannot do a thing about it. I talked to my mentor Prasad ji. He asked me to send for Aditya's mother the next day so that both of us could talk to her.

Now all my hopes are pinned on tomorrow.

16th March 2013, Saturday:

Aditya's mother came at 10 in the morning. Prasad ji and I spoke to her and tried to know the reason for taking Aditya away from the school. She said she was admitting him in another school because in our school medium of instruction was not English. I had deliberately asked Aditya also to come with her mother so that I could meet him once again. And for the last time I saw him smiling in his inimitable style.

Four years have passed since then. Since we continue to stay in the same village, I often see Aditya walking on the road or buying things from shops. But I see neither that magical glow on his face nor his confident personality. It appears that somebody has snatched away that magical charm from Aditya. Despite this, my wish is that this should not happen ever. Only then things would be good for Aditya and it will be a big consolation for me. Only time will tell if that wish will come true.

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