



— Dr. Seuss

THE BEGINNING...

My journey of these five days can sum up to as a reflection of my own childhood where I was fearless. The fear am talking about here is of injuring myself or of society or of people pushing me down. As a child I never thought of all these things which could stop me from doing things I wanted to enjoy. But growing up I lost that somewhere.

The Junga journey gave me back the courage, to believe in myself and to push my own limits. To listen to my own heart and embracing the challenges with an open heart. I learnt how strong I am, both mentally and physically. Moreover, I realized that I exist, and I deserve to be happy doing things which stirs my soul deep within and give me a feeling of being alive.

There were many activities including physical and mental that we participated in during these four days which constantly keep challenging us.

To begin with the first activity which was Hoopla, I realized that chaos in mind can never help you attain the goal. Though while performing this activity, I was enjoying at first but later realized that the power of working together as a team. The task was to be performed within limited boundaries or resources.

The learning was to listen, to plan ahead and to work with the team closely trusting each and every one.

Same thing happened during the other task, the marble and pipe task. It was more about balance, but the important parameters remain same. Focus, listen, plan and team work. This time as the team changed and we had new people in the team, there was utter confusion and chaos. We could not put a single marble and we realized why. We were more focused on what other is doing rather focusing on our own pipes. We didn't listen rather we all wanted to speak, to give directions and it made the situation worse. Also, the way we were focusing on the marbles to stay in the pipe similarly we have to focus on our dreams and goals.

Rappelling experience gave a totally different insight. While performing this activity, I realized how small my fears are and that it is easy to overcome them by facing them. All that matters are the first step.

With faith and confidence, one can easily achieve them.

Terra- Terra was another activity in which I learnt that chaos and lack of planning does not help at all. You need to listen, follow at times and lead when required. This experience taught me that it is easy to lift others and should not leave anyone behind.

With proper planning (strategy) and resources available a difficult target can also be achieved. FIRO-B helped me analyze myself and my needs. The difference in my expressed as well as wanted behavior of inclusion, control and affection. I was surprised with my results and it made me left thinking about my pattern of accepting people.

A deep soul stirring experience was attained by doing dream body. The meditation and the activity afterwards made me go back to my earlier years in life, forcing me to think how simple life was. How simple and beautiful my dreams were. They got complex during the years while growing up and the factors that affected them. How conditioning played important roles, how the society stereotype played vital role in diverting the simple dreams to more money-oriented ones. It made me value my dreams. To learn from my own reflections and to search for the purpose my life.

Trekking was one of the tasks where maximum physical endurance was required but I realized that will power played equal role here. If we want to reach our goal, the distance should not matter. All we need to do is to constantly keep pushing our limits. We are the one who can inspire ourselves to keep going on. It made me realize that even when we are physically exhausted; it is the mind that drives us to keep alive and help us to keep moving on.

Solo night experience taught me that conditions may not always favor me. I may not be in my comfort zone, close to my dear ones or seeking their advice. And during such conditions I need to motivate myself. I need to learn making right decision keeping faith in myself. I need to be my own hero, my own inspiration.

When asked to walk on burning coal, the mere thought make me shiver for a while. But I saw the confidence in the facilitators, they were constantly motivating us. I was effortlessly able to walk on fire and realized that anything is possible if we handle the situation with patience and a calm mind. Difficulties are always going to be there but like the hot coals they will touch us only from the outside and couldn't deter us from us achieving our targets.

In short, these four days at Junga made me realize my inner strength both mentally and physically. It was a soulful experience which made me look into my inner self realizing what I hold the control of my body and soul and that I can achieve what I dream of. This experience is definitely going to help me in my future journey of being a wonderful teacher.

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MY EDUCATIONAL PHILOSHOPHY-

As a kid I had always wished to have a school where I can sing, dance, draw and do craft activities. Though I equally liked the languages and science subject, but I didn't like the classroom idea. My favorite classes used to be where the teacher would take us out in the playground and would make us sit under the huge Peepal tree. Somehow the feeling of not being confined in those four walls used to give a different kind of relief. The mind used to feel fresh and also, I used to secretly feel close to the nature.

I remember there were teachers who made subjects like history and chemistry fun too by giving us examples every time. I had issues understanding complex literature that books used to have. The teacher would simplify it in such a manner by giving examples from day to day life that it became so easy to understand. These teachers used to ask individuals about their life and things happening around which in return used to make every student feel special and attentive.

Such teachers made us respect them more. There was trust between the student teacher bonds. We not only learn from them but got inspired. Students not only learn to accept such teachers but themselves as well. They build confidence in themselves and thrive to learn more and better.

Growing up looking up at my school and teachers I used to wish to have a dream school where the environment should be nonjudgmental. I was good in languages and science subject, may be because the teacher's approach towards teaching these subjects was more practical than theoretical. The teachers used to make sure each and every child id involved. But I used to have phobia for Mathematics. I could never understand it. The fear is still there in me that if someone tries to ask me a simple calculation I get panicked. My mind just goes blank and I try to look out for excuses.

Being good in four subjects could not save me from being in the bad book of the math teacher and she had categorized me as a weak (read dumb) student which used to hurt me a lot. Since childhood I used to have a high regard for myself, I never thought myself as weak or dumb. I was good in studies, sports and other co-curricular activities. I was a healthy child with appropriate weight and height so that being called as dumb used to haunt me.

The other day I was reading educationist Gijubhai's Diva Swapna which is a fictitious story about a teacher and his class four students. It is a great read which tells about how he breaks stereotypes and brings in experimental studies. How he brings innovative styles of teaching through rhymes, stories and plays. How apart from studies he insists on personal hygiene of students is interesting and inspiring.

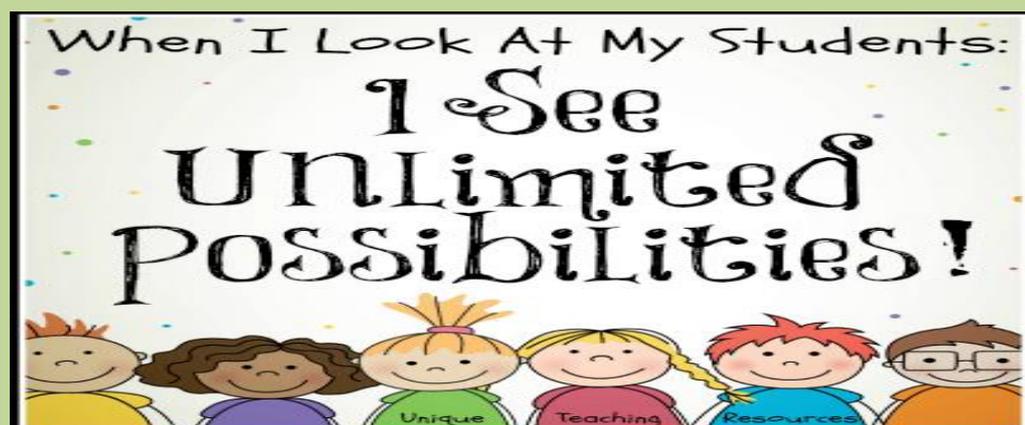
He shows that how with limited resources and great planning real education can be achieved. How he abhorred the idea of cramming and cloning of students and really went through all the pain to bring the change in the system of that school.

I wish my dream school to follow such ways of teaching where teaching and learning should be about sharing and accepting each other. Where there shouldn't be any conditioning forced on the students to follow protocols. Teachers should be aware of the strengths and the area of concern. The students should walk up freely to any teachers for advice or clearing their doubts. There shouldn't be any fear.

I strongly believe in the three principals of true education by Mother and Sri Aurobindo which state that:

- Nothing can be taught
- The mind must be consulted on its own
- Work from near to the far

A child would attain his/her natural development if all the dimensions like vital, physical, mental, psychic and spiritual are addressed.



ME AS AN OBSERVER:

Since my childhood I remember how being well behaved at home and at social events was treated so importantly. How pleased my parents used to be when I would greet elders, follow instructions and perform religious rituals. That was being a good girl then.

When I see the children of my class 3A I feel amazed, may be because I don't have any experience or idea about how wonderfully knowledgeable a 7-8-year-old can be. So, to see them managing their class on their own most of the times amazes me.

They know how to wait for their turns, how to wait for their favorite food until their prayer is finish or how to stand straight when National Anthem is being played.

They have this ownership attitude towards their class to make it clean and look good. They know how to arrange their chairs and tables.

They listen to the so called assigned managers (for various tasks like Prayer, sheets, queue etc) and wouldn't argue. I feel that these children show a great quality of being good humans. They know how to respect others and their views. They know how to listen and when to speak.

They are helpful and thoughtful which is virtue and will help them to grow as a better person, which I am sure they all will. The qualities that have been instilled in them now is going to build a stronger thoughtful and mindful person when they are going to grow up, these attributes will definitely help them in different walks of life wherever they choose to go.

MY CLASSROOM...

Every day since I have started going to my allotted classroom for observation I feel a new energy. To see these tiny tots performing their day to day activities with great zeal brings the child in me. I sometime forget that I am here as an observer and learning to be a future teacher. I immerse myself like them in the activities which they are performing. It is an absolute pleasure to see them performing all those daily activities like prayer to Weather checks to submitting their work etc.

The classroom has their work displayed all over its walls. There are beautiful butterflies made out of folded color sheets at one corner and then there are mango cut cutouts with adjectives defining it on the activity board. There are their favorite characters made by them displayed at another corner and then there is this little book corner where they have got their personal story books to make this mini library.

Every morning the class starts with Morning Prayer followed by national anthem and then peer checking for short nails and I card. I can see the enthusiasm while they are doing so.

Happy faces are seen while singing weather song while the one sitting at the window pull up the blinds to see whether it is a sunny day or cloudy. In a minute their almanacs are out on their table and disappear once the task is over. Though, I can see Ayushman still looking out of the window and then talking slowly something to himself. Dhruvi, who sits next to him, then checks his diary and helps him to fill the details.

They look forward to their class teacher as to what activity she will announce today for the circle time. Though they are always laughing and talking but I observed that they enjoy this time the most. They are seen enjoying the dance and sing activity. Children now, when asked to choose partners for the activity, are choosing partners from the same gender.

Equal enthusiasm is shown in various subject classes whether it is Hindi or English, math or EVS. Even if the answer is not correct, the teacher would never say anything insulting or demotivating. She listens and asks if someone else could also want to try answering it.

I happened to be a part of one QCT once and was really surprised and pleased with how it went. Teacher told me that she has received requests from parents where their kids are behaving rudely at home with them. Teacher told me that she was surprised as those kids have never been rude in the classroom. But she wanted to address this and she has thus planned this QCT activity. She asked children to make a circle by holding hands together and then asked them to sit down. She picked a story from Bible where a child sees God carrying two filled buckets and asks him what they are. To which God replies that they are the tears of Mothers collected over the period of time. God explains that every time when a child is rude to her mother and she cries the tears drop into the bucket. This makes the child feel sorry for his rude behavior and he promises God that he would never hurt his mother again.

After the story was finished, the Teacher paused and asked me to pass the bell to one of the students. She then explained that the bell is the speaking object and will be rotated among them and who so ever wants to speak can speak once they have the bell in their hand.

She then asked them if they have ever hurt anyone and what they want to say about it.

Children took their turn and said that they have hurt someone mostly from the family in some way most of the time unintentionally and that they don't feel good about it.

In the whole process teacher never pointed out the children whose parents have called, even I don't know who all they were. She didn't let the story preach out about it and in a very subtle way she conveyed the message.



OBSERVING MEALTIMES:

Girl child, aged around 2 and a half years old during lunch time. Her mother has nicely spread small pieces of paneer paratha on her favourite plate with some Disney Princess animation on it. The kid demanded for some tomato sauce which her mother readily started pouring in one of the sections of the plate, but the kid wanted it in a separate bowl. Mother rejected her plea and instead put it in the plate. The kid made faces and some attempt of tearless crying and then started demanding for a spoon. Mother said she will give spoon if the kid will eat the paratha. She then started singing 'Old Mc Donald had a farm.' poem to

which the kid started smiling and picked one more bite in her left hand, with one finger dipping in the sauce. Mother didn't say anything and waited with another morsel in her hand. Suddenly her mobile rang, and the kid started demanding for the mobile. She started saying in her childlike voice, "Mumma, video, video." Mother did not give her mobile but sternly said No and asked her to eat the piece that she had in her hands.

OBSERVING PLAYTIMES IN PRE-SCHOOLERS:

Preschool kids in their classroom. Teacher was distributing *slates* and chalks to the students. Children were asked to sit on the desks marked as number 1 and 2. I sat near three kids, one boy and two girls. My presence doesn't seem to bother them at all. The teacher came to them and gave them chalks, one of the girls got a yellow coloured one, the rest two got white each. Girl 1(G1) got happy and happily rejoiced flaunting her yellow chalk, "Yellow chalk". Still holding her yellow chalk she demanded the white chalk from Girl 2(G2), "Give me white na".

The boy(B) was humming some tune and was busy drawing a five-petal flower with the chalk on the slate. G2 started drawing to which the boy said, "Tu nahi kar payegi" G1 giggled then to G2, "Give me your chalk." And without waiting took it from her.

G2 to G1 "Give me yellow now".

G1 to G2, "No."

B to G1, "Give me yellow. White se kaam hone k baad, give me yellow na..ok."

G1, "Nooo, hath peeche rakh".

B then started rubbing G1's slate

G1 loudly 'Dekh ye flower ye wala."

B" Yellow de na , de na."

G1" No, mujhe kaam karne de."

B"De yellow"

G1 humming, busy drawing flower and numbering the petals as 1, 2,3,4and 5.

INTERVIEW A FIVE-YEAR-OLD CHILD:

I got this opportunity in school when I found few 1st graders standing together and talking. I asked them if they like coming to school to which they replied in chorus a big Yes. One girl replied, "We come to school to learn and study. It is very helpful." Another boy said, "I don't come to play here. I want to study'. Third boy said, "I want to become a Pilot, so I have to come to school."

On asking if they know about where Sun and Moon goes at night, one girl said, "Sun goes down to the grass, comes up again in the morning from grass."

Another girl said, "No, Sun and Moon both live in the space and they don't sleep at all."

OBSERVING 8-9-YEAR OLDS IN A PLAYGROUND:

During the sports period, all of them started playing together. But during break, most of the girls preferred playing with their girlfriends and boys with their boys group. But I observed few boys and girls playing together, they were running around, playing some sort of touch and run game.

TALK WITH AN ADOLESCENT BOY OR GIRL:

Boy: He is curious and likes to solve mysteries. He is passionate about sports, arts and studies equally. He enjoys talking about technical stuff. He loves to be around people who are close to him and share his things with them without hesitations or any issues.

Friends are very important to him and vital part of his life. He is ever ready to help them and will support them always. He can do anything for his friends and would not even think again, can even risk his life to save them if their life is in danger.

Recent conflict with parents happened when his mother asked him to study but he was busy on his mobile phone. Mother thought that he is chatting or playing while as per him he was searching some study related data. He admitted that he was the one who started the argument. He lost temper and started throwing tantrums and walked out of the room. Then he pondered and realized that he shouldn't have behaved like that, so he went inside and apologized to her. He convinced her that he will not repeat this and will complete his homework. Also, promised that he will set his priorities and will behave well in future.

Girl: She is full of life, likes adventures and playing basketball. She loves reading and writes too occasionally. She loves her family, but she doesn't like when they interrupt in her things. She doesn't like to be told what to do and what not to do as she thinks she is grown up enough to understand the right and wrong. She knows her limits and is pretty sure that she is not going to anything that would make her family feel bad. She thinks her family, specially her mother needs to start trusting her little more. Friends are her life and she share almost everything with her best friend. She thinks that her best friend understands her better and most important listens without giving unwanted advice.

Most of the conflict occurs not because of studies as she is good in studies and finishes her homework etc on time without being asked to, but because of long telephonic conversations with her friends. Her mother doesn't like her to be on mobile for long. She confesses that she spends lot of time on WhatsApp and FB when she is not talking on phone. At times she apologizes or at times she would just go to her room without eating and then her mother comes and tries to make it up.

***'Every child is gifted. They just unwrap their packages at different times.'*-Unknown**



'School is a building which has four walls with tomorrow inside.' - Lon Walters

A teacher's purpose is not to create students in his own image, but to develop students who can create their own image. - Unknown



"It's the teacher that makes the difference, not the classroom." -Michael Morpurgo







'If a child cannot learn in the way we teach, we must teach in a way the child can learn.'-
unknown



Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. -Nelson
Mandela



"After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world."- Philip Pullman

- Your understanding of the community (their social background)
- Insights from the discussion with a family
- Role of education, purpose of education/ schooling and aspirations
- Understanding of social context as an educator
- Reflection on your privilege/ self
- Questions that you like to explore more or left with

Visiting SMDC School as a part of our four-day expedition.

OBJECTIVE:

As resident teachers we went to observe and learn about the school, students and their social background with the objective

- 1.To value the privileges that we have
- 2.To validate our assumptions of certain places
- 3.To observe how people live in resettlement communities.

Children in this school come from various re settlement colonies situated in the heart of Delhi City In a group of 6 resident IIAT Teachers we went to the colony named Indira Camp.

MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNITY:

We observed the following in Indira Camp Community

Around a population of 5000 people lived in this community. Most people lived in the colony for around 40 years. The roads and the lanes within the camp were narrow with small houses sticking to each other. The people living in some houses had built 2- 3 story houses with very small rooms in them.

Some houses were clean from inside with most modern amenities like Television, Air Cooler and washing machines. Outside the houses there were containers of water filled for using it through the day as they got water once a day.

The roads outside the houses were unkept and the sewage drains were open. Some houses had personal toilets. There were public toilets in the community.

The community had a women welfare cell, Anganwadi Centres, Madarasa (Muslim community learning centre) Primary schools, Banks/ATMs and Doctor's clinics.

One Anganwadi that we visited was run by Government appointed teachers and helpers in their own homes. The basic salary of the helpers is around INR 5000 a month and it was paid on the monthly basis.

Some People in this colony lived on rent. Women worked as house help in the urban localities. Men of the community worked for blue collar jobs. All the members of the extended family lived together in one house or in very close by houses.

Children in the age group of 5-15 went to close by Government schools. Some male children went to Private schools as well.

ROLE OF EDUCATION, PURPOSE OF EDUCATION/ SCHOOLING AND ASPIRATIONS:

The Parents in the community do believe in sending the children to school. We met few children who have dropped out of school to manage the family business or take care of younger children when parents were away for work.

Women showed keen interest to be able to read and write and asked some of our batchmates if they could arrange it for them. For most parents, education was about their children being able to find a good Job and earn a better living in their lives. Most parents were keen on their children being able to speak English. They believed that English was a tool for them to empower themselves. Education for them was to enhance and empower their current occupation and earn more than they were earning currently. They all believed in giving education to their children. Some did admit that the quality of education in the Government schools is not very good and many children do not know basic skills to read and write even at the age of 10. They said that in Government schools there are no teachers to teach in the classes. Children attend to take the Mid-Day Meal. Few parents sent their children to Public schools and private tuitions with the limited income they had to ensure that their children with acquire good skills and get a good Job. Few of them were able to afford sending their wards to school in vans which

Women in the community took the major responsibility of running the house. Working as domestic help of educated class of women they had progressive thinking and they shared a lot of ideas which made us think

Family Planning: In the age group of 18-25 women believed in having not more than 2 children to be able to raise them well. They did admit that there was still a lot of Social and Family pressure for having a male child.

Marriage vs Education: The other idea shared was that a woman was happy to educate her daughter rather than saving money to get her married. She believed that education would help her daughter be less dependent on her husband. She could lead her own life in case of a relationship failure. Older generation of the women had seen beating and other atrocities by Men. They wanted the girl children to therefore to be able to earn a living in case of marital problems and otherwise as well.

INSIGHTS FROM THE DISCUSSION WITH A FAMILY: While wandering through the streets of Indira colony, Prerna and I saw an old woman wearing a cotton saree in U.P. style covering her head standing outside the 'Hostel for Blind people" leaning over a motorcycle. We decided to interview her and took her permission. She was startled for a moment and then agreed as she was observing us as a team for the last two days. She thought we are from some NGO as it is common for NGPs to visit their community often. We introduced our self and our purpose for visiting the community and she readily agreed to help us with whatever information she has about the place.

So, her name is Shyamwati and she is nearly around 64-65 years of age. She originally belonged to a place called Khurja-Bulandsehar in Punjab. She was married there but migrated to Delhi with

her husband some 20-30 years ago and since then they have been living here. On asking if her husband works now, she informed that he doesn't as his legs are not working due to some ailment. Earlier he had an egg stall and used to sell them. She also used to work but not anymore. About her education status she informed that she is not educated. Back in her village they had their own farm land, dairy animals like Buffaloes and goats. They used to get ample milk from them.

Her life has changed since she moved to Delhi but she was not able to comment exactly on what all things are different as she was mostly living in the house busy doing house hold chores. Any thing that required to step out of the house like buying daily use objects or vegetables etc were done by her Father-in-law or husband.

She was happy as she was living with her husband so it did not matter for her much to feel sad about leaving her native. She told us that how her in laws family had occupied most of the land here and that it was her brother-in-law who build the Blind school there.

She has six daughters and two sons. On asking their ages, she said she doesn't know what their ages are. We asked her that was it because of the wish of having a male child that she has six daughters to which she said yes. We asked her if she had any used birth control method. She replied she has underwent the operation.

While we were still talking suddenly her daughter in law came and started asking what is going on. She invited us all inside their house which we found was quite big and spacious as compared to other houses of the locality. They had built a hostel inside for blind people too so there were multiple rooms and bathrooms. The kitchen area was also quite big. They offered us water, there was a maid to wash their laundry and another one to wash the dishes. Which was quite surprising for us because when we had spotted her outside we thought her to be one of the normal residents. While we were trying to interview the daughter-in-law, two ladies entered with two children, a boy and a girl.

We noticed one was the mausi who met her on the first day and took us around the community. She told us that she works there as a cook. Our surprise took us to another level, but we controlled. The other lady was Shyamwati's daughter and the two kids were her grandchildren. Both the young women got busy taking selfies on their phone which we noticed was an Iphone.

Continuing our discussion on the birth of children without thinking about other aspects, she informed us that her mother-in-law had 11 boys and 3 girls, out of which one girl and 2 boys died early. But then she quickly added that nowadays they don't believe in giving birth to many children. She showed us the two kids playing in the porch who were her grandchildren. She said all her daughters and sons have two kids each and they are happy. They send both the girl as well as the boy child to the same school and that they don't differentiate between them.

ORGANISING BAL MELA IN SDMC SCHOOL

IAAT Facilitators and students together organised a Bal mela from the children of the community with the objective to-

1. Thank the community for sharing their space and life experiences with us
2. Call the children to the school to play games and have fun.
3. Aid Admissions for the coming academic year and giving the adults of the community to see and communicate with the SMDC school authorities.

Children and adults participated in the event with a lot of excitement.

The programme started with physical activity-based games with children and adults. To entertain the parents and children Dance performances were planned.

Number of stalls for Creativity including clay Moulding, Creative Activities involving cut and paste, Rangoli, Story Telling, Science experiments, Games and Tattoo painting were arranged by the IAAT residents. The children and adults enjoyed the actives and were served with Lunch.

UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL CONTEXT AS AN EDUCATOR: We got an exposure to yet another side of education. This brought us closer to the reality of the education system in the Government Schools. We got aware of the overall functioning and duties of the teaching community in these schools. The Government schools are struggling to survive because of the lack of Professional Teachers. As the wedges for the teachers in these schools is very less very few teachers continue to work in the schools and the classes function without teachers. Therefore, the quality of education is not even touching literacy levels of the children. Few children cannot read even in class 4 or 5. Working towards providing them education that empowers (gives them confidence) them in true sense should be the role of Educators.

REFLECTION ON YOUR PRIVILEGE/ SELF:

Visiting the community and being the part of the school and students for these four days made me really think about how blessed we are. Even as a kid my family and parents never differentiated between my brother and me. We were given equal opportunities in every sense.

We were living in good societies where we had everything available. We never had any issues of water or electricity. We never had to struggle for anything that is so basic for these people. We had always used washroom since we have come to this world and these people, most of them they don't have proper bathroom.

Everyday life is a struggle for them. Life for women and kids is really challenging. But in spite of all these challenges and struggles they still know how to smile and live life to the fullest. They live in harmony and are thoughtful about their neighbours which is not seen in big societies now a day. I got to learn so much from them and I am really thankful to IAAT team for giving me this opportunity to be a part of this campaign and to let me contribute my small part in the baal mela.

