

A touch of Childhood nostalgia

In my childhood, I had seen that some special guest would come during some special Bengali occasions at my home. We used to celebrate those days with the family members and the guests too. At that time the internet and the telephone were not so strong for communication purposes. I stayed in a village beside the river. I have an elder sister who is around five years older than me. I belong to a joint family and there are lots of steps of morality which direct our growth. We have the freedom to learn things from nature and society more than the books. I used to go to school and we all people used to sit together from grade one to four under one roof. Sometimes I skipped the exam, I was scolded badly but not so seriously like today's children. Skipping an exam in my time was not a curse, it was not so powerful to damage our future possibility. We didn't have the pressure of showing good in social life. There was no competition, no comparison, but only to learn and learn from outside what we had got. My eyes and my mind used to absorb what it saw. We all love our teacher very much. Yes, we had a lively life to live. Fun which generated fun and in the end, it made a child grow up. I, as well as my family never thought about our futures so consciously during my childhood, they may be left that on my age. In those days, generally due to male-dominated society we girls used to suffer. Only two things I could remember very well as a comparison: one, people used to ask me "How many brothers or sisters you have??" I answered only my "didi", I never understood why they felt bad as I had no brothers. Because of my family, the male-dominated society didn't affect our childhood much. The other comparison I heard in my childhood among Bengalis that a boy was like a diamond ring no matter how it's shaped, it may or may not be used in the finger but it's priceless. Apart from all those memories, I wish to share a thought of my life which changed me. I discovered one big truth from that early morning nostalgia of my life.

There is an occasion in our Bengali calendar called "Ranna Puja". My mother cooked very well and the aroma spread from the kitchen to the outside corridor is still present in my mind. That day we had a very pleasant breath in the air. It was a fresh morning of "Ranna Pujo". I was around 6 years old, a baby girl full of innocence. I was sitting on the floor and tried to draw something with the colour of imagination that I had seen in real life. In our childhood, the scenario was like a fresh river, one small home under a blue sky that reflects an open window of our life through our drawing book. A children's imaginations are granted from sounds also. That child could draw what she felt. Childhood drawing is really a breaking phase of life where her mind and thoughts vibrate in her drawing book. I didn't know whether I could draw well or not, because my parents forgot to compare with neighbour's children. Maybe, they didn't pay special attention to that six-year-old girl's drawing book. My childhood actions were free from all interference of male-dominated society which was a blessing for me. I had an open ground free in all directions to run my imaginations. But that blessing was not so long-lasting for me. If it was long-lasting then maybe I could have another form of my identity to carry myself. So, "what happened?? "

One of the guests, I used to call him uncle, had visited our home. I liked him but not too much, I didn't know why. Generally we, the children have a relation of affection with senior guests but still, my heart didn't accept it for him. He came to me and saw my drawing book as other guests did. I had a big smile on my face and waiting for some good compliments as a child did when someone showed interest in her work. And I was not an exception to that. But some unexceptional event changed the course of my life. Yes, the matter was unexpected as well as an exceptional. He told me that my drawings were not good. Then I didn't have the age to compare how good or bad it would be from my age. My smile was gone.. It was like a black cloud tried covering my sky of imagination with all its power. I asked about what was the good drawing. And the reply made me not to draw pictures again in rest of my childhood with the same passion and interest as I did before. He told me to draw an image of the goddess with an elephant was coming out of her mouth. That was my fate. I was even could not able to imagine what he said to me. I was just going to cry and promised myself not to draw pictures again because I was made believed by an uncle that I didn't know how to draw, it seemed to be a clear rejection from my life at the age of six. It was the first comparison of my life that I had to face as a child. At that age, I didn't have enough maturity to understand and the courage to face questions on my works. My elder sister loved me very much, whenever someone tried to hurt her little one, she used to protect me. But she was also ten years old. When those unkind words broke my inner sole very much, she diverted the matter in another direction which was quite funny. My mom and elder sister were standing near the door a few steps from my physical worlds but close to my mental world. Her sound was like an outburst even she did not realize. It was not outbursts of voice, It was an outburst of some touchy words. She asked uncle, "how nice your black hair at your old age, How do you maintain?". In that time people also did colour in the hair at an old age to look young and they felt shy to announce the matter in front of the public so he could not able to reply in front of my mother. I had seen whenever I or my sister did something wrong my mom made round eyes which indicated something wrong was going on. But this time my mom didn't show her eyes. The matter was sheltered equally as I could not answer my drawing with imagination colours and he could not answer about his real hair colour. Equal judgements may be done by god. Almighty may wish to give justice to that little girl as criticizing an innocent childhood work could not be tolerated in his world, a child only deserves inspirations and motivations. After that day I didn't love to draw. I lost my love and faith in my drawing, even I started to hate the colours. My parents sent me to a drawing teacher but I was not able to continue. After 20 years, I realized the truth behind it. I am thankful that he did not question me from my primary school's textbooks. I realized the criticism is for those who have the maturity to understand the positive side of criticism by another person or society. A fresh childhood is not a playground to criticize.

Childhood needs positive words to develop themselves. Nowadays parents are so conscious to generate maturity in an innocent child and the society becomes that "uncle". That failure of imagination snatches my love for drawing from me. It was really painful. But I forget everything and my busy schedule covers my that part of memories.

Now after 20 years I am a research scholar of a reputed institution. Last Durga Puja, I went home and meet my little nephew. He is around eight years old. He came to me with his drawing book where he used to draw his childhood's freedom. This was really nice to document his childhood in drawing book. I saw his valuable part of imagination in colours. He told me that he loved to draw. I blessed him to become an artist. He may not understand my words and he may not know why I told him so. But my expression behind those words inspired him. He needs that positive stimulations to nurture himself. Then he took the drawing book and went back to his room with full of happiness that may reflect his next drawing. I am not someone to decide the future of that kid but I am someone who can uplift his soul to cultivate a field where he likes to stay with happiness. The happiness behind someone's work really a great thing that matters for child. The happiness of work can give confidence to a handicap to go for Himalaya mountain journey. In my childhood, I used to think to study English literature but maturity changes the direction. It is common and happens very naturally. Now a day I also got rejected but I have that maturity to accept the rejection and motivate me once again, but that six-year girl failed to do so, hence she lost her that drawing book in some criticism. Between all the thoughts I took a cup of coffee and felt very relieved by thinking that now a days that uncle did not visit our home otherwise he may have spoilt my nephew's childhood pleasure and peace.....

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