

The person to whom I talked is a security guard at Himadri Hostel whose name is Vijay. He is originally from Bihar but living in Delhi since 1992 at Nargoli. He is a retired army officer from NSG Black Commando Unit where he served as Para Jumper. Sharing his army experience he went to many countries like South Africa, America, Sri Lanka to provide training. In Sri Lanka he was a part of the “Shanti Sena” after the Sri Lankan Civil War during the time of Rajiv Gandhi, as our prime minister. He has even served in Kargil and when I asked him if he could share any experience he seemed disturbed and said the Kargil Memories still give him trauma. Sharing one experience he said once there were 12 soldiers like him who were forced to live in a congested room and 6 of them died of bullet shots in front of their eyes and they couldn't do anything, they were helpless!! Even the base station said that they could not provide them help until 48 hours, they were foodless and waterless for more than 72 hours. (I know this is not

relevant to what was asked us to do but I felt this worth sharing.)



After voluntarily retiring in 2005 he joined as a Security Guard. His salary is around 10,000 after 8 hours of duty everyday. Apart from this he also gets pension from Army which is around 15000. He owns a house in Nargoli. He is the only earning member in the family of five including his wife and 3

sons. He often find it difficult to make both ends meet. Though they have basic needs of vegetarian food and clothes but after the 20th day the tension of inadequate of money could be felt. His eldest son is looking for job after completing his B.Com, the younger one doing B.Com whereas the youngest is still in 10th standard and the wife is housewife. According to him for a person with a family like him, owning a house in Delhi and with basic necessities atleast require atleast 35,000 per month. He being ex-army officers also get some facilities from Indian Army like free medical treatment in the best hospitals of Delhi, army canteen and some bottles of wine every month. When asked if he had had earned more money how he thought could have made his life better, to which he replied that we see a wage-labourer who earns 400 per day and a rich man who earns 1,00,000 per day, both eventually eat the same grain, when you are rich you can spend on mobile maintenance, car maintenance, clothes leisure and many more. So even if he would have been earning more the only difference that would come would be the quality of life which would have made him desire for more materialistic needs. He seemed to be satisfied with what he was having or consuming.

This was exactly what we saw in the income exercise in the class. The question that arises from wage labour-rich man example he gave is if the rich person is satisfied? Does he not have desire for more? In most of the cases it is observed that person with less privileges is more satisfied than with more exposure to privileges. The technology keeps changing and updating so when we are having a comfortable quality life, we are more exposed to the changing

technology, so it is natural to have desire for latest technology. This gets us trapped in the web of materialism. But a poor person who has limited exposure to such things will leave him with more time for himself and family(society), which is the actual happiness. I'm not saying that the poorest will be happiest what I'm just saying is that the person with basic necessities of life would lead a happier life. Now the question would arise what is basic necessities of life? I completely agree that this is a subjective question and couldn't be generalized for all, but what I'm think is we could atleast decide it for ourselves and see are we living a under-privileged or luxurious life. I could see this being applicable in my life as well. The life has become a rat-race to achieve more and this race we are losing ourselves. Deteriorating health and mental stress are so common in the rich-middle class society.

One more eye-opening learning that I had from this interaction how once an army officer who was being well paid off is now living happily even with low-income. This made me think that how consumer based our lives have become. We all want growth, by growth we seldom connect it to economic growth, but is it the real growth of ourselves? What about the growth of innerself? If necessary we could easily cut down our need to like a simple yet satisfactory life will might enable the growth of our innerself.

