

The Healing Handle of Hindrance

Seven years Susmita Das is a student of class 2 at Beltola Mazipara lower primary school is standing very right of the city Guwahati in village Bangaon (Beltola), Dist Kamrup (M), Assam having an attractive campus.

Susmita is with born deformity of 'Cleft lip and palate disorder' in medical terminology. She attends the school with the other children even though she is differently able child.



Susmita and her school



The school has 217 children - 102 boys and 115 girls which is the strength of the school. Anita Deka, the head teacher of the school can be seen taking round of the school, discharging her duty in collaboration with six enthusiastic teachers to improve the education. This is the pinnacle of the school. The class wise enrolment is as follows-

Susmita is daughter of Mr. Mihir Das and Mrs. Sipra Das who belong to S.C. community hailing from Bajarichera of dist Karimganj of Assam. They came to Guwahati to earn their livelihood 5 years ago. Mihir is a sweet-maker, works in a hotel situated at six-Mile far from his residence. Mother is a house wife. Their mother tongue is Sylheti (a sub dialect of Bangali origin). They have been living in mixed lingual atmosphere where they dwell. They lived at Bangaon in semi Basti area where different linguistic communities have been living.

They got their first child Susmita, who has born with cleft lip disorder. She is not able to speak with proper pronunciation of the words that are belonging to palatal or guttural letters of the alphabets. Parents got her admitted at Blue Bell Hospital, Shillong for medical treatment for two times in couple of years when she was at the age of one year. Due to poor economic condition, they were not able to continue her treatment left it in between.

In the beginning of her school days she was uncomfortable in the school because teachers were compassionate but unaware of how to teach and involve such child. Owing to stigma of disability she was hesitant in attending school regularly. The teachers could not understand her conversations. The teachers started involving her in indigenous games. This gave an opportunity to teachers and students both to understand the signs of her language. Slowly and steadily, this engagement and efforts of the head teacher and other teachers helped the child in playing with other children.

Her classmates started helping her by conveying message and speaking to the teachers whenever teachers are not able to understand her dialogue. Teachers inspired her to go together with the other children in all curricular area. She writes with good handwriting, read all the lessons that are given to her.

The place of the school is inhabitant of 'Majhi' community (S.C.), one of the tea-tribes of various tea-tribe communities of Assam. Now the wave of urbanization, the good no of community people have left this place by handing over the land to the privileged communities. The remaining numbers have been living in this native place with strong

struggle of livelihood. Their occupation is now day labors, cart puller, wood vendor, mason, carpenter, driver etc. it is appeared that the children from weaker section are enrolled here. The society is a mixed socio-economic state even though their involvement in school progress is positive. The people from advanced community send their children to the private schools established in and around the city.

Smt. Kusum Sahu, the class teacher helps her to develop her learning with the other children together. She can take part in all academic activities except reading and few words relating to palatal or guttural sound based words. The teachers and the classmates have helped her collectively during classes and she does not feel difficulties with other able children. She played with her friends without any hesitation. Her positive sides are highlighted in the classes as to combat the challenges.

Head teacher and class teacher have taken a collaborative step and support her enthusiasm of learning in an inclusive way of learning. She plays different local indigenous games and sports spontaneously with her friends. No hesitation is appeared here. Even the friends have never paid any discrimination to her in any cases.



Mr. P. Goswami, a senior faculty of DIET Mirza visited the school and interacted with teachers, head teachers, students and parents of Susmita. Thereafter has been to school once in a month or two. Whenever he goes to school he interacts with the community members also who are working as daily wages labours and carpenters etc. He did arrange and participate in health check up programme. He discussed it with doctors and one of the neighbours, Smt Kaveri Chakravarti, teacher in a private school and close to the family contacted the doctors and have been pursuing the family for surgical treatment

The doctor has laid a written advice to get her admitted in the GMCH shortly. Hopefully, Susmita would be able to speak and express her opinions and view.

Good wishes to Susmita.

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