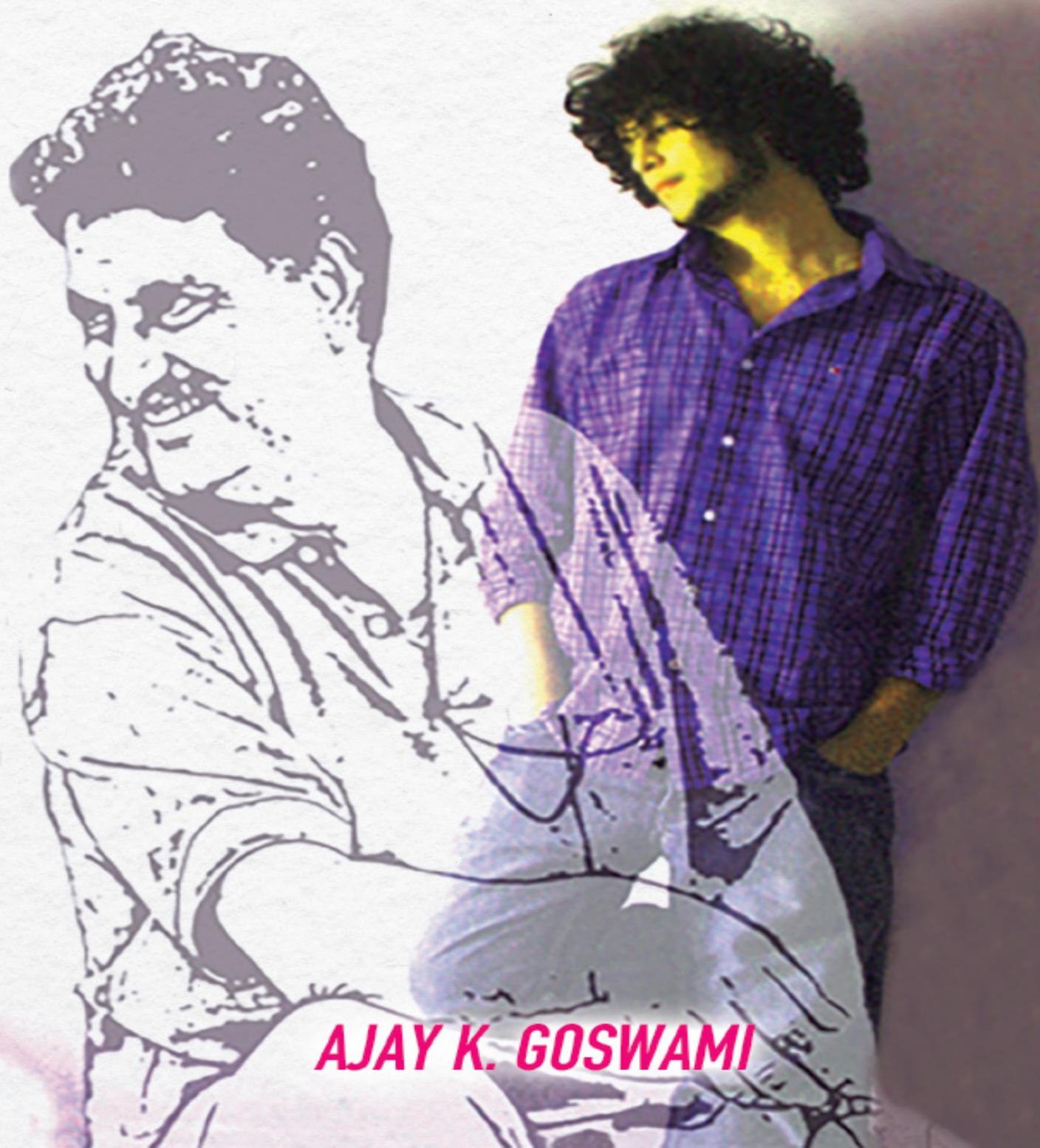


IT'S YOUR STORY COMMON MAN!

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY



AJAY K. GOSWAMI

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Tentative Chapters



Synopsis of the Book

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CHAPTER 1

Childhood



It was 15th May of year 1956, precisely 6.15 AM, a bright summer morning, a very hot day indeed in a house of 1500 square yard and in a small room of ten by ten square feet, cry of a baby boy was heard. The midwife (Dai is a lady who performs deliveries) announced for a boy and the usual wave of joy and one of the family members ran for a metal plate (Thali) to be rung at the roof top of the house making the news that a boy is born. The ringing of a thali meant celebration for a male child, a part of rituals and kind of invitation to the entire neighborhood for badhai. It was 40 degree Celsius outside as is common in western Rajasthan and particularly Bikaner where the Boy a future commoner was born. The Panchang or ephemeris were consulted after the birth and the horoscope was cast. 15th May morning 6.15 AM longitude of Bikaner, and the tithi, rashi or the nakshyatra were calculated. The results were, Vrish lagan, kark rashi, punarvashu nakshyatra and finally a good horoscope was drawn. It was predicted in short that the child will have a good future and strong position in society.

Growing up in a family of eight members is never difficult process. Present nuclear families, having only husband and wife are very different from those days. Since old joint family was a self-supporting system where you don't have to divide roles of mother or caretaker sisters and father or elder brothers. The system is perpetual and does take care of itself. The hero (now I should name him) never felt short of patronage and protection. There were six elder siblings of all ages, three brothers and two sisters who

provided him all guidance from small step to big decisions. Parents were a bonus for the final guidance. In a way a truly cozy and comfortable atmosphere for a normal social development in those times. Hero was christened as ANKIT, MEANING IMPRINT OR MARKED. Perhaps the eldest brother wanted this uncommon name in those days for the hero. Although, very off the track and truly unusual in those days. Common naming pattern was on the gods or great people. Commonly Ashutosh, Shiv, Krishna, etc. were the popular options. The memories of earlier childhood have great impression on the child and Ankit was no exception. The happy and sad moments of the children are imprinted and a future response – reaction strategy is built up. A child is born like a clean slate and these impressions start coming out as expressions when he is molded into an adult. The behavior is this response. Astrology, though plays an important role in personality of a Jatak. The Vrish lagan means a taurian in English and all the feature of a bull, that is strong, determined to the extent of uncompromising, rather stubborn and in exact words sometimes impractical are the typical personality traits most visible in the person. Ankit was no exception.

I should change the pattern of addressing now. As my hero that is I am now properly named I should converse one to one with my readers. This would neither create an obstacle in communication nor would make me and the hero split into two. Usual schooling was started at the age of five years in those days for children of that kind. The school in which I was admitted due to financial limits was Rashtra Unnati with students from lower middle class or slightly upward economic status families. It was not a very bad school though but in retrospect I feel it should have been still better. Question of affordability. I was brought to school for admission on a pleasant summer, July morning. The school was established by one Mr. Banwari Lal Yadav, who was in the process of developing education into a business, running a private English medium school, as was the notion in those days. Post-independence the need of educated people boomed and those who could perceive were trying this industry for a short cut success. The trick was, hire some low paid smart teachers (yes, with slightly better English), start a small school with banner of so called English medium (half of the management and teachers could not pronounce English and used to pronounce it as ENGLISS). In my school the principal cum manager of the

school was our owner's wife Mrs. Janaki Devi, a robust Haryanvi with a rigid tough face like Russians. The advantage of her personality superseded her poor education. She could not put her full signatures on the school fee receipt and just wrote two letters JA DE, meaning Janaki Devi. I could observe all these deficiencies of the system, but was not big enough to resist my fate. The owner of the school was student of my grandfather and my father was also given due respect when he took me to his school for admission. Any way, we passed through prayer hall to office of the principal, a hut temporarily built for the purpose. The passage to the office from hall typically smelt of pickles and parathas. The prayer hall served as a dining cum function cum library cum meeting room and that was something I could know later on. Not an encouraging ambience, though, but commoners have little choices. We, me and my pa (Kaka we called him) entered into principal's office where after initial introduction formalities for admission were done. One interesting thing I could discover was my pa did not know my English date of birth (May 15th) and by fluke wrote it 5th July on the basis of memory. I understand those days it was difficult to remember dates of birth of seven, eight or nine children that too in English calendar. One could guess how important the event was for the parents. The second thing, even more interesting my father did was changing my name to Ajay Kumar instead of a very beautiful, unusual name Ankit, I could not know till date how this creativity came into my father's mind. I was totally changed on the first day itself I had to carry burden of two names throughout my life.

Finally that was my first day to school. I was left to my class room and my pa waived me good bye. This was for me as if I was entering into a jungle without any direction. The feeling of being left alone from the cozy surroundings and protected family atmosphere was something very deep and torturous. I did not have courage to fly and my feathers were yet very tender. I still remember I was comparing myself with the chicks of sparrow which nested in our home and by accident sometimes they fell to our ground. The feathers of the chicks trembled like bee and their entire body was unable to cope with the shock. We used to pick them with a soft muslin cloth and put back them to their nest. I wished someone, as we did would have come to my rescue and get me free from the tough and stony weather of the school. Nobody came. It was from here I started my journey to the

real world. As I entered into the small class room with a typical smell of mixed perfumes from all sorts of children revealing their background and a persistent smell of room itself containing every trace of happening with the air including farting by the students. Although it was a very strange feeling, slightly awestricken, slightly curious, fear of unknown and finally the inquiry how a school is? I was told I have to greet teacher with a smile and to my surprise the lady teacher was not that unfriendly. A young lady with spectacles and very sisterly looks. She was wearing a white sari with an orange border, gracious in her looks and body language. I was directed to a small desk in corner first row. I finally surrendered to the world of discipline, custody and schooling. This meant to me loss of freedom, loss of security and protection. I could not keep on thinking as the teacher had started her lesson. The desk and the chair were just enough to accommodate me. I just enquired my left by slight glance and could know another boy, almost in my emotional situation was sitting next to me. I don't know what was being taught. Devi Singh Khichi my immediate neighbor sitting on the desk next to me appeared to be friendly soul with a chiseled face, curious eyes and above all a smiling face. He was looking more experienced and confident than me. I found a sense of relief and was slightly fearless due to his gestures. So, this was a smooth landing from a comfortable, protected home stay of five long years to arena of struggle, competition, dreams and insecurities which made my journey commenced. I hated going to school and from the very next day I had to discipline myself for the morning readiness to go to my cell. Surroundings of a 20 × 25 classroom, with photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Shaheed Bhagat Singh and If I remember, Gokhale was going to be my confines for next five years. I could understand this judgment and was trying to reconcile with the situation. Things were not difficult once I surrendered. The teaching was good and I being front benchers could make out easily what the teacher taught us. English was my subject of interest and I had already been taught at my home what was being taught at school. I got an edge over my peers and soon became favorite of my class teacher. Kusum Sharma was her name and as I already found in her a sisterly look soon she became my favorite teacher. It is very common in these schools, to get favor of teachers if you are smart in subject and co-curricular activities. I was good in subjects of Hindi, Math and English and last but not the least good in science. All was well. A nine to five routine, with small lunch break, some

small garden playground activities and back to home was the regular routine now. Our class room was on the boundary wall of the school facing railways track and every half an hour or so a train passed to draw our attention. We felt as if everything is on a track. A fresh, free boy of five that was I used to get tired when came back to my home. Though a walking distance, yet me and my chums particularly Khichi and others tried to delay it to buy some more freedom to reach, our home. Schooling had started imprinting its deep impressions on my mind. The final outcome was that I turned into a disciplined commoner, a true commoner to his core. In between friendship, socializing, family, cousins, brothers and sisters the train of life caught its speed.

Our house was modest in size a 1000 square yard walled house with a big iron gate; we call it Pirod in Bikaner. Two big parallel rooms of fifteen by twenty square feet, two verandahs and two more small rooms in back side, an angan of good size, kitchen and water storage cum stand for matkas. The place is built for the purpose of store drinking as well as water tank, it is called parindha. A typical English architecture in those days with airy rooms and windows with question answer type design. Every door or window used to have a window or door opposite to it and they called it answer. Scientific reason was cross ventilation, since in those days the fans were a luxury not affordable in common middle class houses. There were very few houses who could afford an electricity connection what to talk of electric fans. A big iron girder bisected the big room's ceiling longitudinally. It was a ceiling made of heavy stone slabs of ten by one and half feet. A truly tough and strong structure with minimum furniture. Although out of these two big rooms one room was prerogative of our eldest brother and one for all of us, the Chillar Party. Interesting thing was that my eldest brother, our star performer was a three time dropout in first year of B.Sc. and was seriously aspiring for a medical career, we were the leftovers. He was a privileged son as my father had seen in him a future doctor. In spite of our poor financial conditions and expensive medical career my mom rather couraged to support this cause even at the cost of her precious jewelry and belongings, if need be. He was to be treated as a VIP, though he was very arrogant furious, irritable, quarrelsome and autocratic in his own style. My parents had a deep desire to make him into a medic. He used to work very hard and was a very studious student, but his failures had

made him bit miserable and short tempered. As an extremely understanding Ma and Pa instructed us and we were supposed to sacrifice our personal freedom of playing in the house soon after this dangerous brother of ours came home. His personal failures were so nicely justified by our parents to make him feel normal and achieve some goal they decided for him. In this game of patience and overprotection for him we, particularly the Chillar Party was growing in a system of jungle raj. We could be thrashed for a slightest disturbance at the time of his studies. If I think in retrospect the deepest bad impression about the authority I have memorized in my subconscious mind is oppression and unjust behavior. I have a very reactionary approach towards authority. I hate authority of any one. I am a rebellion because of this impression of my brain. Leaving apart this development in me or may be my other siblings, my big brother got into a medical college after he cleared exams. A big relief, but again five to six great miserable years ahead. Studies in medical college was a very special career in 1960s. For a family as ours it was a pride, social reputation as well as envy for the entire community. Miseries never left us. We were very short of finances. We could hardly meet our ends with salary of our pa, kaka which was some hundred fifty odd rupees. Question wars fees and cost of our brother's medical education. My father was an interesting combination of over pampered first child of my grandfather, neither worldly wise nor a true escapist. He was extremely care free (apparently it seemed), slightly irresponsible but extremely optimistic as far as his approach to life was concerned. He was a good second division M.A. Visharad and an L.L.B. dropout. After his graduation he joined district supply office or rationing department as an officer and served for a couple of years. As narrated by my mother, Ma those were perhaps the best days for our family. Secured, independent and better our family shifted to a distant town called Sikar. The story was well before my birth. Ma told me the finest memories about our family she had were that time. I do not have an idea how long my father did this job. I understand within a very short period he rebelled against his boss. It was a much unrelated pretext of asking him to follow orders. He in his usual way did not like orders; perhaps he thought he was more qualified than his boss. I can now know why I too hated order. It was in our genes. To add miseries to our family he threw a file on his boss's face and without resigning came home to pack up and leave.

Changing this paragraph signifies change of entire course of life of seven plus family members. Back to days of uncertainty, miseries and life on meager resources. I can now think in retrospect about one good thing my maternal grandfather had done. He had gifted a good house to our mother in Kanya Dan. It was the biggest hide out of failures of my father's career. At least we need not to rush for a rented house. It was a god shelter without current income. My father started some teaching job in a private school run by a local community trust. It was Pushkarna Higher secondary school in Bikaner town. A very small salary but yes an escape for an overqualified person like my father. Ups and downs, struggle for existence and a basic approach to survive. This was perhaps an apt discussion for our state of affairs. So, now when my eldest brother was admitted to a medical college again we were in a difficult situation. I think the fees for one year ad other expenses were more than my father's one year salary. I understand my mother had to sell off part of her precious jewelry for the cost of my brother's fees. I understand we were not thought to be mature enough to share these things and our Pa and lately our Mamas used to settle these issues. Selling or mortgaging jewelry and raising temporary funds for cost of an expensive education was thought to be their business. I always suspect my Mamas as I could understand lately were extracting benefits from even these deals. Any ways my mother was an extremely devoted soul and never thought about her selfish ends. I do not know how and why she was different from her brothers. Ma was an excellent home maker. She used to manage small funds with skill. Although we were always short of funds but she never let us feel pinch of poverty. May be we were not free to spend, yet somehow we could maintain minimum level of living with dignity. My father was attempting different sources to enhance his income but he was not lucky enough to bear any fruits of his efforts. An alternative was worked out for our income. One of my mama financed a cow to us. The cow was a good breed black spotted one producing six to seven liters of milk every day. My mama who financed it was buying milk from us and small income plus good pure cow milk to all of us was in fact a good idea to support us. But a painful realization and rather an intense, deep impression I had about my father was not good during all these struggling years of my childhood. Nobody in our community ever recognized my Pa as a responsible person. This was partly due to ill impressions created by my seven mamas whose entire clan counted more than fifty odd people

including my mamis and their children. My maternal side always had a bad opinion about my Pa. My mamas had a very derogative expression for my father and they were sympathetic to us on this account as we were related to them. I never felt it good. I had internally developed a counter feeling of hate towards these relatives. You cannot accept you father to be a failure. He was not. He was a simple person with a pure heart and compassionate outlook towards his life. He lacked tricks of intrigue and practical wisdom, but was an extremely saintly soul. He too was ignorant about the behavior of his in laws towards him. He knew it for sure and expressed his reaction. He was one who hardly visited any of my maternal side families even on invitation. The best thing was that my mother never regretted being his wife. In spite of many arguments or small scuffles with him she never condemned his independent way and approach to life. It was the reason I never lost esteem and respect for my father or any of us as far as I know. My father used to drink Bhang (decoction of Henna, with milk, and dry fruits). It is offered to Dauji (deity, brother of Shri Krishna) in Pushtimarg temples and distributed as a Prasad. The temple was within our Chowk. In Bikaner, small colonies for each of Brahmin and other communities are earmarked. Our community lived in Goswami Chowk. The bhang is not treated as an intoxicant in our community and it is not thought to be a bad addiction. Never the less it does all possible harm to your body in spite of being Prasad. Whatever small memories about my father in his younger days I have about my kaka were mixed ones. Feelings of awe, affectionate, an egoist type and slightly depressed. In all he was a very loveable father and I was too affectionate to him. An interesting description about him would definitely serve purpose of my story. He was a well-qualified, eldest son of an equally reputed and learned scholar of Sanskrit Pt. Dhan Roop Goswami. My grandfather was a devout and great teacher of Bikaner. He used to teach Sanskrit to almost entire scholarly clan who were interested in Sanskrit. Our paternal house was very small and my grandfather had supported education of his two younger brothers, by teaching privately, those who were affluent in town. Meaning thereby he had earned a lot but never tried to generate wealth through his profession. I remember his daily routine in his active days was very busy. He used to start his day by six of the morning and came back by eight or nine of the evening. My grandmother was a very sweet lady. I had never seen her resting. She cooked food for a family of eight sons and daily guests from families of our

relations. Managing a family of average twelve persons of all ages was an arduous task, which she did without slightest of irritation. Anyway, my childhood was not part of my grandfather's residence and before my birth our family had shifted to our own house away from the Chowk. Coming back to my father, in a way he was a pampered eldest son of my grandpa as usual in those days. Kaka never bothered about what others thought of him. He was a free soul and he did what he thought was right. It would be difficult to explain persona of him in a brief paragraph, since he was the person who gave me traits and typical characters of a common man. It would also be wrong if I do not describe each of the person and situations which created a common man out of me, the people who impacted, the people who meant to me everything and those who shaped my mold of a common man. The story runs like a celluloid reel, no titles or subtitles in colored letters. The common man in me grew sensitively recording each and every minutest happening as an episode of life. Starry eyes and big hope-to be great one day. The seeds of greatness are sown in each of us; it is only right humidity and conditions including soil and air around us which makes us a big tree of greatness. No one is borne great. Some of us get this right kind of condition and WOW we are great. You cannot expect a great personality from average shanty type surroundings and from a municipality run school with students from poor families with wretched ideas, poverty and *no hope* type life styles. My eight years of schooling in Rashtra Unnati were the most formative days of my development and I had sweet, enjoyable memories from there. I was changed into a good student, sharp in his subjects and smart in extracurricular or co-curricular activities. I had few good friends, including Raj Kumar, Devi Singh, and Ashok Bhatnagar whom I treated as my best friends. I used to get first position and at the most stood second in some of my classes. I was short and younger than my other class mates and since my pa was school owner's Guru Bhai (two students who are taught by same teacher) I had a very special status in the school. More so I proved it by my excellence in subjects. All of sudden the situation changed as my school was only up to eighth standard a drastic decision of transferring me from a senior school has to be taken. I and Devi Singh wanted to shift to Sadul Higher Secondary school which had eighth and some still junior classes. We tried but could not get into the school because of limited number of admissions every year in lower classes. The most unfortunate turn in my life was perhaps from here. An alternative was

worked out and both of us were put into a very third rate school close to the one where actually we should have been admitted. It was a government middle school with students mostly from lower income group students. It was the real India I came across from here. We were told that next year we would be admitted to Sadul School and it's a temporary arrangement. Devi Singh's father was a lecturer in History and he was also a typical example of fathers those days. Not bothering much about our future and atmospheric transfer, we landed into another jungle of ruffians. The third raters and filthy children from all types of families. We had classmates from Pan Wala (Beetle Merchant or Kiosk seller) to Mason or carpenters' family. I was too depressed and awe stricken, not because of the worries of quality of learning there but because of attitude and behavior of the students. Starting from their abusive language to their values for the education. Anybody can guess how innocent my mind was that time and the age of 12 plus to bear this burden of transformation alone. My only anchor was Devi Singh with whom I could share my situation. The school was Pabu Path Shala, named after Pabuji a tribal hero of the area mostly in Marwar region. Rajasthan in Princely times was divided into major regions called Marwar, including western Rajasthan, Mewar covering southern parts, of Udaipur and Wagar covering Dungar Pur. We have many local Deities in tribal or semi tribal cultures Baba Ram Dev and Pabuji are ones who had glorious history of tribes attached. The school hence named after Pabuji belonged to their followers or not, I could not know, but yes me and my friend Devi Singh truly became sort of guinea pigs of our fathers for the democratic learning of what real India is. Our school was one where most of the teachers found difficult to control some sixty seventy under training ruffians physically strong but mentally rebellious of their surrender as a student. Result was corporal punishment with whatever tool which could calm down this type. Big rulers made of solid wood was a common tool to thrash them. Keeping them in a Cock posture (Murga) or even putting a pencil between two fingers and pressing it causing severe pain were some simpler methods apart from beating to the tune of making them blue. I cannot explain what sort of school was it and how on earth these children are going to be civilized. They were equal of freedom fighters to me. I of course repented, but never regretted. In between some small business could be done of teaching subject, in fact our earlier schooling and understanding of the subject made us comfortable as compared to our other class mates. The

student population was perhaps sent here to simply avoid their *HurDang* (uncontrolled nuisance) at home. My teachers mostly seemed helpless to control them. The school was simply to engage them and no teaching and keep them busy rather than teach them and make them civilized learners. An impression was deeply engraved in my memory, the imprint of hard life of the common man of India and about the populist education system of our country. I could guess that I was here because of affordability rather than purpose. The infra-structure is for numbers than quality. Best part of the year was my true encounter with MOTHER INDIA. I was part of this system, in a slightly better position. I was third generation or fourth generation learner and most of my peers were first or at the most second generation learners of literate parents. Other students treated me and Devi Singh babies from other planet and thought of us as elites. I gathered a good number of friends who were also being experiments of their parents for one reason or the other. They also were misfit like us. So they flocked and befriended me and Devi Singh. And to add fire to fury, one of our class mates slightly hefty and more than our age used his leadership in lunch break. Entire class was given lesson on human anatomy by him. I remember he was perverted one and had obsession with his private parts. He was an exhibitionist in a true sense. Whenever he got opportunity he would pull down his shorts and show us, the entire class his erect privates, standing on the teachers' table. I was unable to cope with the situation and all of us who were slightly civilized were equally afraid and were in a what-to-do situation. We could not dare to complain and also could not relish this act of him. I have intense memories of the entire surrounding and my moral molestation in hand of these ruffians. The class room had a typical smell of so many offensive aromas mixed in one and consistency due to poor cross ventilation in the room. We used to eat our lunch outside but the bags with Tiffin were stored in the class room on a year to year basis. Human sweat, parathas, pickles and loudly announcing family background persisted like an archeological artifact in the class room. I still remember my innocent face with fear, frustration, sense of confusion and the burning question why I was admitted to this school. I used to look my face in the mirror when I came home and always tried to forget about the entire psychological traumas and moral conflicts I had gone through. I understand this toil led to real life training as a mix of bitter and sweet impressions. I could have been saved from that guilty adolescence feeling if I was put to a better school.

Sweet memories I mentioned was in the sense that I would not have got the opportunity to understand real India. More so because the down to earth poor children live this kind of life and they don't have any dreams to become civilized good citizens. They have reconciled with what they have and always curse their fate.

Another experience of my ventures those days was even more challenging. One of our friend Hukki, son of a railway engine driver living in our colony used to treat all trains his father's property. Those days some goods train used to pass along our colony and the railway station was very close to our school. A very venturesome soul, this friend suggested me and Devi Singh to ride this train and enjoy free ride to school. Only risk was catching the running train. It seemed to be a big task but our usual way of not accepting defeat or proving ourselves finally led us to this brave way of travelling to our school. God save nothing happened to us and we passed the test for entry into a ruffian club of shanty children. At times I used to discourage my friend that it is better to walk than to put our life to risk. This kind of traveling by goods train can lead to accident but hidden challenge and my faith in Devi Singh made this commute every day part of our school transport. From railway station we two would go to Labhuji Ka Katla, a cloth market for a very cold water quench, *Peow* the water hut we call in our part of India. Sitting for a while in extremely cool Katla (MALL OF THOSE DAYS) with almost no sun and heat refreshed us for the studies. We used to enter from the nearby back gate of Pabu Pathshala. Summarily I was trained rigorously for real India in my eighth standard. The India we did not know (me and my friend) since we were protected middle class offspring of different India. Finally we both cleared our exams with good grades and came out of this great school of ours. Fortunately this experiment of our parents did not lead to any physical damage leave aside the mental transformation I had. Further education up to 11th standard was really not so bad and irregular since we both landed to our own territory of economy and society. I came to a school where I could devote to my studies with pride, self-respect and no guilt. I acquired real learning and mastery in my subjects. I was admitted to math stream with Hindi, English, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics as my minor and major subjects; it was preparatory schooling for an engineering college. My friend Devi Singh got admission into Biology or medical stream, with biology as a major. From

here onwards we departed for our worlds. Although I had a pain of not getting biology as my stream of choice, yet I was otherwise comfortable with dream to get an engineering career in future. My friend Devi Singh as usual an *easy go lucky* type got busy with his new circle of friends and I too adopted my own friends. I was bit weak in mathematics because I was not prepared for the rigors of algebra, trigonometry and coordinate geometry. In fact I felt subjects are also related to your family. I was very smart in biology, due to my elder brothers' facilitation of the subject to me in my earlier classes. One of my brothers was doing medical, other one in veterinary sciences and the third one, a very smart guy all of them studied biology very keenly. They had been great biology students in their schools. I was left with no choice and no guidance for mathematics. So, my brothers were no help to me in my area of choice Result was I started developing a hidden fear and apathy for math and extreme interest in physics, chemistry and even languages in which I was excellent. I was not from a background whose family could afford tuitions in math. It was also treated as a disrepute to student who took tuitions. Finally I got my tenths and eleventh board exams cleared with distinctions in all other subjects but mathematics. I was to be sent to an engineering college, may be outside Rajasthan since my merit could not fetch me admission in reputed colleges as BITS Pilani or even Jodhpur, one of the best colleges in our state. The greatest frustration I had started developing was a reaction to our kind of parenting. My father never bothered about the problems his children were facing. My ma on the other hand dealt everything with her common sense. She was extremely preoccupied with her domestic duties and as a mother was only a home maker. She was not educated also to handle such big issues like career. In all, my elder brothers took up the role of father and did what best could have been done in this situation. First option which was available was to send me outside Bikaner for an engineering college; the second option was to change my math to biology for a B.Sc. course available in our town. Dungar College Bikaner was their suggestion. I was also very badly hurt by my math performance and did not want to stretch it in engineering without much confidence. I landed with a failure to get into engineering, whereas my other classmates got admissions to BITS Pilani, MREC Jaipur with hopes and a glamorous career those days. This was first shock of life I got and still reconciling with the fate I started my Graduation in Biology or Medical stream. Simple, shy, an introvert with hopes but a very confused

approach for life. I felt as if things are not destined for us the commoners. Last hope was getting into medical after First year of B.Sc., appearing in pre medical state entrance and getting good merit. I understood it was difficult, yet not impossible. And one more thing I always felt was, we the younger issues of our parents were not their much liked ones as far as their interest in our careers was concerned. I could see that the entire burning desire of my mother and father was satiated once their choice of sons, the eldest ones got into medical. Professional coaching centers were rare in those days in our city (early 70s) and what best was available, was personal tuitions by college professors Shrimali Ji, Bhandai Ji Rajni Kant Ji etc. They were stalwarts guiding big groups for PMT success. Alas, I was not one who could afford this luxury. I got a 574 rank for 300 seats in medical that too including reservation quotas as a result of my toil for three hot summer months' preparation. I got out of medical seats and decided to continue my B.Sc. second year. How simply the life changes its course. I could not be admitted to a medical college. Except my Pa nobody was feeling bad about my failure. I do not know how my father, this time felt concerned. May be he was expecting me to clear the competition, may be. Life of a common man takes such turns abruptly. Your horoscope guides the destiny. The dreamy common man in me started to plan for M.Sc. that too in chemistry, as the grades were more than excellent to get into the course. Moreover the education cost, a primary factor for my family was also in favor of this. By this time my father had also superannuated and with dried source of income, I am sure my parents too might not be interested in bearing the cost of an expensive careers for the left out younger children including me, My elder brother next to me, had already got admitted to M.Sc. and was pursuing his studies in the same college. One more important factor or rather deterrent to our family for our good education was their economy. With a joint struggle and true spirit of a strong family bond, we the younger child sacrificed our entire childhood and rights for the cause of our two elder brothers' educations. One of them was in medical and other one in veterinary. On account of their costly fees and expenses we were always told to compromise till we got their careers finished. We always hoped that by the time they would get good jobs with fat salaries we would be strongly supported financially. The story of our family got a very bad and tragic end. Both of them were appointed on posts of government doctors and veterinary assistant surgeon with reasonable salaries, but

perhaps we had no right to share their fruits. My eldest brother, before joining a job had live in relationship type marriage with a doctor girl from our community but an extremely selfish and cunning lady from a very disturbed family. As a result my mother and our family could not expect some support from a grown up son. My mother and father reconciled with difficulty but we the younger children in the stages of their formative career years were left with our sad parents and no resources or reserves to anchor upon. Entire jewelry my mother had and whatever security was with her was already sold for the education of our earlier heroes. What a destiny indeed! To add more pain to our bleeding hearts the second hope our next elder brother who also was nicely settled for a couple of years on government job and finally broke our last remains of resources by some fraudulent action I do not know till day. I understand he has advanced big cash from his office cash to one of his government Treasury officer friend, a gambler I suppose to return within three days. Finally the higher officer alerted my brother and rather warned him for this act of misappropriation. My whole family was in shock when we were informed to either repay that money before enquiry or face the consequences. I do remember nobody could digest this happening and we could not think where from we would get this huge sum of money, perhaps in tune of one lac rupees. I even remember one of my uncles who resided in Madhya Pradesh and one of my Mama got us rescued. The heavy cost was my mother sold off almost every valuable thing in gold or silver to raise this fund. My father was already retired and had no financial standing of this sort. Finally our family within a very short period faced almost two earthquakes, rather simultaneously. We were broken to the core. We had stopped dreaming and were almost in a consoling mode for our broken parents. Within no interval this elder brother of ours married a Jain doctor girl and left us and our family for our fates. Our community, the so called Samaj boycotted us for allowing this inter-caste marriage.

Reconciling with the situation I finished my graduation and took admission in M.Sc. Chemistry in the very same college. Shifted goals could be administrative services, or even research and teaching in a college or university. As they told me the stars were bit favorable now and during 1977 to 1979 I did my Post graduation with best possible rank and grades. It was an eight to ten hours study schedule and finally strategy of learning and

trick to score best marks worked well. Another big support in the department was my brother in law who facilitated every possible help in my learning and faring well in my degree. I was in a sum favorite student of the entire chemistry faculty. I topped the university and came out with 73% plus mark sheet. Finally before declaration of my results for M.Sc. my brother in law requested his Ph.D. guide, a very respectable professor of the university department to accept me for a Ph.D. researcher under his supervision. The story of a common man took a turn from here onwards. The stage now had changed to Rajasthan University Jaipur. The department of chemistry of our university one of the biggest departments of our country with a big number of professors working on all possible research areas from inorganic chemistry to organic chemistry or analytical chemistry to pharmaceutical chemistry. On a warm June evening I accompanied my brother in law on a train bound for Jaipur. My elder sisters in law's family was settled in Jaipur but my brother in law was working in Bikaner as a lecturer in physical chemistry. This was journey of my life in fact commencement of my real story. My sister, I and my brother in law were traveling to their home in Jaipur. I was accompanying them for my actual beginning of Ph.D. and joining the department as a research scholar. As was decided I would talk to the professor and then finally shift to Jaipur and join the university. It was really an emotional situation, I was sitting near a window and bidding good bye to my loved city Bikaner. The train had started and slowly, puffing black smoke, whistling harshly to ward off cattle and even people away from track. It was my last time when I could remember my old days as a free student, one of the most social creatures of M.Sc. I faintly remember the pain of departing your sweet home after almost 19–20 years of attachment with the place and the people. It was truly an emotional state indefinable in words. Bye!!

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